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SINCE I WAS TWENTY-FIVE

## *Books by Frank Rutter*

SOME CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS.

EVOLUTION IN MODERN ART.

THE POETRY OF ARCHITECTURE.

THE OLD MASTERS.

THE WALLACE COLLECTION.

ROSSETTI: PAINTER AND MAN OF LETTERS.

WHISTLER: A BIOGRAPHY AND AN ESTIMATE.

THEODORE ROUSSEL.

THE PATH TO PARIS.

'VARSITY TYPES.

# SINCE I WAS TWENTY-FIVE

BY

FRANK RUTTER

BOSTON · AND · NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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TO

LEONARD REES

EDITOR OF "THE SUNDAY TIMES"

WHO

"MADE ME WHAT I AM"

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# I

## SINCE I WAS TWENTY-FIVE

A BRIGHT girl of eighteen got up to ask a question at the close of a lecture on modern painting last winter. 'What I can't understand,' she said, 'is why there should have been all these violent changes in art, when there have been no corresponding changes in life.'

'Ah my dear young lady,' said the lecturer, 'I expect you are not old enough to remember London in the days of the hansom-cab and horse-omnibus.'

No changes! Why, there is far less difference between the Academy of to-day and the Academy of twenty-five years ago, than there is between modern London and the London of 1901.

When I was twenty-five Queen Victoria had just died and the Kaiser, who had attended her funeral, was a popular figure. Leader-writers wrote glibly of the 'warm affection' existing between the monarchs of Germany and Great Britain and of the cordial relations which existed between their two countries. The Boer War was entering upon its final stage, and London, rather bored with the subject, was already giving its attention to other things. 'Floradora' was still running at the Lyric, Miss Rosie Boote was singing 'Maisie's a Daisy' at the Gaiety, Marie Lloyd had celebrated her thirty-first birthday, and London Scots were endeavouring, not always with success, to persuade their cockney friends that a new comedian, Harry Lauder, at the Tivoli was really very funny. The music-halls were flourishing,

the promenades of the Empire, the Alhambra and the 'Pav' were crowded nightly; but the revue was unknown, except in Paris. Knowing ones explained that it might go down in France but would never succeed in England.

The 'tuppenny tube' was already running from Shepherd's Bush to the Bank, but property owners from Harlesden to Clapham had not yet given up hope of establishing a claim for compensation on account of the 'vibration': and from day to day the daily journals told us about the 'very influential opposition' which was active against the 'proposed new tube from Hammersmith to Piccadilly Circus.' The London County Council was constructing, very leisurely, a new avenue between Holborn and the Strand, and all sorts of people busied themselves with suggesting names for the new thoroughfare. One friend of mine wrote to the papers pointing out that since Pall Mall was derived from the once popular Italian ball-and-mallet game 'Palamaglio,' it would be appropriate to remind posterity of another, more recent pastime by christening this avenue 'The Ping Pong.' I have always been sorry that my friend's suggestion was not adopted: Kingsway is a poor substitute.

No changes! Everything has changed except human nature, and if, apart from a few nervous diseases, men and women remain mentally and physically much the same as they were, they have succeeded at least in totally altering their outward appearance. In 1901 the women had wasp-waists and wore skirts that trailed on the ground; for men, the correct attire for the West End was a silk-hat and frock-coat—a thing never seen now except on a shop-walker—and in summer only a few very brave and bohemian spirits discarded the bowler for the soft felt hat then known as a 'Homburg hat.'

How many people, I wonder, are aware that we owe this comfortable headgear to one of those good-natured acts for which King Edward VII. was famous? When he was Prince of Wales he was asked, during a visit to Friedrichshof,

to inspect a little factory in the neighbouring town of Homburg where soft felt hats were made. To oblige a friend, the Prince consented and courteously accepted one of the hats. Finding it comfortable His Royal Highness wore it publicly and, of course, all the English visitors then bought similar hats and wore them. The fame of the ' Homburg hat ' spread to England and British manufacturers began to make them. To-day they are more worn than any other kind of hat, but my experience is that most of the young men who wear them know little of their origin. They cherish a vague belief that these hats originally came to England from the United States. It is true Americans wore them. I remember my father's old friend George Haven Putnam, the New York publisher, wearing a soft felt hat when I was a boy of six or seven, and he used to scoff at the ' hide-bound conservatism ' of the ' Britisher ' which kept him loyal to the hard felt—but in the eighties and nineties we had not yet learned to take our fashions from America, and it was Teutonic plus royal influence that ultimately established the soft felt in England.

There is a new fashion in the writing of memoirs which has great possibilities. Mr. Darrell Figgis has shown us how much more distinguished it is to discourse ' On Not Seeing Swinburne ' than to relate the trite and tedious experience of having really seen that great poet. I also have had tea with Watts Dunton at ' The Pines,' I also have received polite messages from Swinburne who was never quite well enough to see me. I have also just missed being introduced to Whistler, though Mr. Luke Ionides once took me to his very door. A great deal can be said about what has not happened, and now that the time has come to set down my own reminiscences, I am tempted to wonder whether, after all, the Figgisian style of autobiography is not preferable to the Margotesque.

I wish I had the courage to adopt it, for then I could fill this book with stories about royal personages. That would delight the citizens of the United States and other good

republicans. To delight them would delight me, for America is the land of big circulations after which every self-respecting author yearns. But alas! I have no imagination. I can write of nothing but facts. Still, here is a fact which may tend to prove that my life has not been altogether empty and wasted.

It is true I have had few opportunities of getting upon intimate terms with royalties. I lack the wide experience in this respect of Mr. Oscar Browning who once said that the Kaiser was ' the nicest emperor he had ever met.'—But that, of course, was long before the war.—For my part I have never, to my knowledge, conversed with any emperor, nice or otherwise, while even with kings and princes I have not had more than a nodding acquaintance. On one occasion it might have gone further, but . . .

It was like this. Urgent affairs connected with the improvement of horse breeding often called his late Majesty, King Edward VII. to Newmarket. One summer's day in 1897, the royal train, for some reason or other, was held up in the station at Cambridge. I happened to be there with a friend who expected to meet a long lost cousin when the next theatrical company arrived. As we walked down the platform we recognised the Prince of Wales—as he was then—looking out through the saloon window. We politely removed our straw hats and His Royal Highness returned the compliment with his soft felt.

We took another turn, walked back along the platform and, in passing the saloon, we capped him again. For the second time the royal hat was raised in reply. We thought it would be rather fun to see how often we could induce H.R.H. to salute us. So back we turned and, passing the saloon, we raised our hats for the third time.

But now the recognition was mutual, and instead of taking off his hat, the Prince shook a waggish forefinger at us with a smile that implied, 'No, my boys, you don't catch me a third time.' If only we could have passed and saluted him a fourth time, I believe he might

have *spoken*. But before we could get back—the train moved on.

To be candid, this is the only anecdote of royalty which I can claim as my very own, though during my childhood, when my parents lived not far from Paddington Station, I was familiar enough with the appearance of the Royal Family. Not only was I privileged to see from a window in Picadilly the wonderful cavalcade of Queen Victoria's first Jubilee—that array of monarchs and princes among whom the Ex-Kaiser in his white uniform and silver helmet is the figure which lives most brightly in my memory—but I used to see the old Queen fairly often being driven to Paddington on her way to Windsor. Once, I remember, I had a 'close-up' view on the platform itself of the two young princes, our present King and his elder brother the Duke of Clarence.

In the course of our walks in Kensington Gardens, my nurse would now and again point out to me celebrities of the day, and I can recall quite vividly the long moustaches of Lord Randolph Churchill whom we often met in the Gardens.

At home one night, long after I should have been in bed and asleep, my nurse caught me in my nightdress peeping over the banisters. Far below me in the hall I was watching a tightly-buttoned blue overcoat being shown into the library.

'Who is it?' I whispered.

'That is Mr. Ruskin who has come to see your father,' I was informed. And that is all I can remember of the great critic—a long blue overcoat very tightly buttoned!

The student learned in Ruskin's writings may recall a passage from *Fors Clavigera*, in which passing reference is made to a solicitor who 'preferred bricks and mortar to Turner's water-colours.' Inasmuch as no name is mentioned, there would be no reason in revealing that the solicitor referred to was my father, the late Henry Rutter, LL.B., were it not that the incident to which allusion is

here made eventually led to a rupture of the business relations which had existed between the Ruskin and Rutter families for two generations.

My grandfather, John Champley Rutter, was solicitor to John Ruskin's father throughout the latter's lifetime; and after my father had entered the firm he naturally, as the younger man, acted as John Ruskin's man of affairs till they seriously disagreed, not about the artistic merit of Turner's water-colours, but upon the question of how to raise a large sum of money needed for the purchase of certain drawings.

It is the duty of a solicitor to advise as well as to act for his client, and when Ruskin, late one July, gave instructions for the sale of some of his property in London, in order that he might at once have the wherewithal to buy some Turner drawings, my father ventured to suggest another course of action. He pointed out that if the property was put on the market during the dead season of August it could not possibly be expected to bring any sum approaching its real value, and that its forced sale at this time of the year would almost certainly involve a serious loss. On the other hand, he explained that it would be perfectly easy, without running this risk, to raise the sum of money required by a mortgage on the same property.

To a mortgage, however, Ruskin emphatically declined to consent. He was ready and willing to be a lender on occasion, as I shall show presently, but he would not be himself a borrower. To borrow was utterly against a principle which Ruskin held tenaciously. 'Borrowers,' he wrote in *The Crown of Wild Olive*, 'are nearly always ill-spenders, and it is with lent money that all evil is mainly done, and all unjust war protracted.'

Finding it impossible to persuade Ruskin to consent to a mortgage, my father urged him at least to wait till the autumn before selling. But to this advice also Ruskin turned a deaf ear. He wanted the Turners at once, and he wanted to pay, not to owe for them, even if the credit given

was merely a matter of a few months. Finally it was pointed out to him that the immediate sale of these houses would necessarily injure other people's property as well as his own. If the ' bricks and mortar ' failed to realize their proper price in the market, and were still sold without reserve, their sale would inevitably tend to depreciate all house property in the neighbourhood. But it was in vain that my father pleaded with Ruskin to postpone this sale for the sake of other house-owners, who might regard the depreciation of their property with less equanimity than the great art-critic showed. Ruskin had no great sympathy with other property-owners, and he failed to recognize that he had any moral responsibility towards them. At last my father's old-fashioned respect for the property of others led him to declare that he himself could not be a party to the transaction, which he considered morally wrong as well as highly prejudicial to his client's best interests. The parting was reluctant and painful on both sides, but each man was determined, and not to be persuaded by the other, and so my father lost his client, as Ruskin, in the circumstances, could do nothing but instruct another solicitor.

As showing that my father's fears were not unjustified, it may not be irrelevant to add that when the property was sold without reserve, houses which had cost £2,000 to buy within the preceding ten years were knocked down for about £800 apiece, with the result that for many years afterwards property in the neighbourhood steadily depreciated and declined in value.

One of the earliest cases with which my father was entrusted by Ruskin involved a journey to Switzerland. After the nullification of his marriage—a painful business which my grandfather contrived to get settled with the least possible publicity—John Ruskin had some idea of living permanently abroad. His thoughts turned to his beloved Switzerland, where he bought a piece of land on which to build a chalet. But after he had paid down a considerable sum of money to bind the bargain, Ruskin

discovered that by the existing Swiss law no foreigner could own a rood of Swiss soil, and that he could never become the legal owner of the property he had partly paid for unless he became a naturalized Swiss. Even his love of Switzerland could not persuade him to take this step, and therefore, abandoning the idea of possessing a residence in Switzerland, he sought for the return of the money he had already paid. As this was not easily forthcoming, and as no notice was taken of written demands from England, it eventually became necessary to take legal proceedings on the spot, and my father was sent out to Switzerland to act for Ruskin in the matter.

My father's adventures while in Switzerland on this business, as recorded in his diary, read almost like a romance. His persistence was rewarded, the greater portion of the money was refunded, and the business finally concluded to Ruskin's entire satisfaction.

My father was not the only person who found Ruskin at times rather a difficult man to get on with. Fred F. Foottet, the painter, who in his youth was a pupil of the great critic, has told me that on one occasion he was crossing Trafalgar Square with Ruskin during a drenching rain-storm. As he turned his collar up, Foottet incautiously remarked to his companion, 'I'm afraid, Mr. Ruskin, we're in for some bad weather.'

'Bad weather!' thundered Ruskin. 'There's no such thing as bad weather. There are only different sorts of *good* weather.'

## II

## LONDON IN THE NINETIES

One Monday afternoon in 1921—I forget which month—I was walking down Fleet Street with Hamilton Fyfe. We had been lunching at the Whitefriars Club and, as often happens when two men go away together from a gathering, we started talking about the men we had just left behind. One of them was Arnold Danvers Power, a director of W. H. Smith & Sons.

'I didn't know you knew Power,' Fyfe began.

'Power, of course I know Power,' I replied, 'why we were at school and Cambridge together.'

'Power a Cambridge man!' groaned Fyfe comically. 'Well, there's another illusion shattered. Why I always imagined he had started life at some station bookstall and had romantically risen from newsboy to director.'

That is so like Fyfe. As an old Fettes boy, a Scotsman, and an ardent champion of Labour, he is naturally distressed to find English university men occupying important positions they have won by their own merits. But, of course, I didn't take his remark seriously. Power, who at all ages has had a distinctly patrician appearance, is about the last person one could comfortably picture as wearing in his youth the cap-and-basket of the newsboy.

Really Fate manages our careers very clumsily. It would have been far better and far more appropriate, as the reader will soon perceive, if *I* had become a director of W. H. Smith & Son, and if Power had become an art critic.

I first knew Power in April, 1889. In that month I entered Merchant Taylors' School and was placed in the Lower Division. The Form sat in alphabetical order: there was no Q, the future director was the last P, I was the only R, and so my desk was next to that of Power, who, I remember, very politely but rather distantly initiated me into the ways of the school which he had attended for more than a year past. The next term Power and I were 'moved' into the Upper Division, the term after that we passed out of the Lower School and entered the Lower Fifth together, and two terms later we were both in the Upper Fifth. But some time afterwards we parted company for a while. Power shot ahead of me, not because he was a year older, but because I was inclined to be indolent while he was always studious. Also soon after he was in the Lower Sixth, he began to specialise in Hebrew, while, when I got there I spent a year specialising in History, the subject that always had the greatest attraction for me.

Had I had my own way I should have remained in the History Class and taken my chance of a scholarship at Oxford or Cambridge on that subject: but other people thought differently. The worst thing about M.T.S. in my time was the school's positive mania for collecting scalps in the winning of open competitions at Oxford and Cambridge. That was what we were there for—on the Classical Side, at all events—to win a scholarship or exhibition and add another point to the annual list of School Honours. When I was seventeen I had a trial trip for a History Scholarship at Exeter College, Oxford. I was not expected to get it, but I didn't do well in the examination. My form-masters discussed my chances very seriously. If I continued to specialise in History I might—or I might not—win something: the competition was considerable, and my chances were about even.

On the other hand, if I specialised in Hebrew my success was practically a certainty. Merchant Taylors' had a reputation for sweeping the board in Hebrew. There was

scarcely any serious competition. At that time only one other school, Pocklington Grammar School in Yorkshire, regularly taught Hebrew and sent boys up for scholarship examinations; only once in a blue moon did competitors emerge from other schools. Hebrew was IT. These things were represented to my parents.

My father—a man of varied hobbies and immense learning—was at that time keenly interested in Biblical archaeology, Assyriology and the Palestine Exploration Fund. He thought it was an excellent idea that I should learn Hebrew, and I fancy the dear man saw me in the future as a second Sayce or Flinders Petrie. All this interested *him*, so it ought to interest me. I suppose *if* I had shown the slightest talent for mathematics—which I never at any time did—and if my father had been approached at the period when he used to spend night after night gazing at the stars through a giant telescope, why then I might have been trained to become an astronomer. Thus are careers made.

So it came about that in 1893 I joined Power again in the special Hebrew Class, but by this time, of course, he was well advanced in the language while I was only a beginner. For three years I was soaked in the literature of the Old Testament, and, beyond making me a confirmed agnostic, with a mighty hatred of Jehovah (Yahveh), I don't know that it really did me any harm.

Our Hebrew master, the late George James Spurrell, a Balliol man, had a rather reserved but not unattractive personality. There was nothing of the tyrant in him, and he had a way of talking to us as equals, of treating us as adults and friends, which was very flattering to youth. It seems funny now to remember that though he then appeared to me to be quite a middle-aged man, he was really only seventeen years older than I was. He was a good teacher, and that I ever got a degree at Cambridge I owe chiefly to his teaching, for, through my own laziness, it was my school work that pulled me through. I am always thankful that Spurrell was not in Holy Orders and so taught Hebrew in

what I may term a strictly non-sectarian manner. He gave me some good advice once which it has been a pleasure to follow.

Life in his class was pleasurably smooth and tranquil, but worked up into periods of feverish activity when we were in for a pot-hunting examination. During one of these periods Spurrell thought I was not looking well. 'Don't overdo it,' he said, 'how are you sleeping?' I confessed that I had not been sleeping too well.

'Take my advice, Rutter,' he said seriously, 'when you have been really working in the evening, always read a novel for an hour before going to bed. That will take your mind off your work and you'll find you'll sleep better.'

All my life I have followed this advice, only usually I do the reading, not before, but after I have gone to bed.

Our class lost Power at the end of the summer term in 1894. In due course he had become a Prompter and had won a Hebrew Scholarship at Queens', Cambridge, where he commenced residence in the following October. I also became a Prompter in the following year, I also obtained a 'scalp' from Queens', Cambridge, and in January, 1896, I began residence in the college where Power was a second-year man. Power took his degree in 1897; I—taking the full four years permitted to candidates for the Semitic Languages Tripos—took mine in 1899.

It is true, Power had two years' start of me; but it must now be clear to all unbiassed minds that my qualifications for a directorship of W. H. Smith & Sons are quite as good as his. For my part, I feel it is a position which would have improved my credit—I mean, which I could have filled with credit.

But I have not yet shown why Power ought to have been an art critic. That is still easier to prove. Even when we were in the Lower School together, Power was miles ahead of me in drawing and I have never caught him up. When I was doing exceedingly bad drawings from flat copies, Power was already entrusted with a colour-box

and was doing charming little water-colours. He has the executive gift which I never had. He can do things; I can only analyze them and theorize. Ask any professional painter and he will say at once that, of the two of us, it is Power who should be the art critic. Here and there, perhaps, a few writers may dissent from this proposition, but their opinion is not worth bothering about. No, the irrelevancy of our respective positions in life is plain and manifest. The world has gone all wrong in these particulars, still it can yet be put right. It is not too late for us to exchange jobs. I'm willing—if Power is.

How often are the young impressed with the desirability of making 'useful friends,' and how sadly in our youth do we miss golden opportunities. It is painful to think how many of the boys who were my favourite companions at school have achieved nothing, and how many of those I neglected—or even despised—have attained distinction. But how was I to know that of several scrubby little boys named Evans who were at school with me in 1890, one was to blossom out into Capt. E. R. G. R. Evans, R.N., who succeeded Capt. Scott in the command of the British Antarctic Expedition of 1909-1913?

How was I to guess that a fair-haired, girlish-looking little fellow in a sailor-suit who was so often in the same form with me—only higher up—would grow into the distinguished civil servant Sir Henry Noel Bunbury, K.C.B., who, as A.G. of the Ministry of Shipping in 1917 might have found me—if only I had played my cards more cleverly—a really soft job at Whitehall during the German air-raids?

What a pity I did not perceive that another class-mate, a small beady-eyed little boy in a knickerbocker suit, a boy who always kept his attention glued to his book and once did me out of a French prize by a narrow margin, why didn't I perceive that he was destined to become Sir Herbert Creedy, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., Secretary of the War Office and Member of the Army Council, a man who by a mere nod

might have invested me with the intelligence and insignia of a Staff Officer?

But no, in my misspent youth I seem to have deliberately avoided intimacy with all the good little boys whose scholastic virtues were ultimately to have their own reward at Oxford and the Home Civil. Instead of making up to the Bunburies and the Creedies, I wasted my time by making a pal of young Jack Beringer, brother of Vera the original 'Little Lord Fauntleroy,' and neglected my home work to accompany him to matinees and evening performances.

Together we went to the Lyceum to see 'The Bells' and 'Henry VIII.'—that wonderful production in which the cast included Forbes Robertson, William Terriss, Acton Bond, and Gordon Craig, as well as Irving and Ellen Terry: together we saw Toole in 'Walker, London,' May Yohe and E. J. Lonnen in 'Little Christopher Columbus,' and Sir George Alexander in 'Sunlight and Shadow.'

I often saw George Alexander on the stage: off, I only saw him once, but that was a memorable occasion and I remember it well though at the time I was a very small boy.

He had come either to open or take some part in a bazaar at Putney. Now a well-known character in Putney society in those days was a Mrs. Paul, a Scottish lady with a high, piercing voice and a terribly embarrassing memory. She used to upset my eldest brother by repeatedly greeting him in company with 'Eh Tharnton, ye're quite the man noo: and to think I remember helping to bath you when you were a babby!' At last Thornton could stand it no longer, and one day he made the shocking reply, 'Yes, Mrs. Paul, but you wouldn't do it *now*, would you?' After that Mrs. Paul left him severely alone.

Well, Mr. George Alexander—it was before he received his knighthood—was at the bazaar surrounded by a bevy of admiring matinée-girls when presently Mrs. Paul pushed her way into the circle and her shrill voice was heard all over the ground saying, 'Eh Mr. Aye-lix-ander, ye'll no

remember me, but I kenned ye well when ye were a young mon at the carpet factory at Peebles.'

There was a horrid silence for a few moments, and then George Alexander said quickly, 'My dear lady, of course, of course. Let me get you a cup of tea,' and he hurried her away to a secluded corner of the tea-tent where she could unloose her reminiscences in greater privacy.

Friends who know my real age must often be tempted to suspect my veracity when I begin to indulge in theatrical reminiscences. But I have a retentive memory and I commenced playgoing at an extremely early age. I cannot remember the first theatre I was taken to—a pantomime—but I have been told that I disgraced myself and made a scene during the Harlequinade owing to my total lack of a proper sense of humour.

When the clown assaulted the policeman, I cried aloud and burst into tears. I was told not to be a little fool, that it was only a game and very funny. But I refused to be comforted, so my sister has told me, and sobbed out, 'I don't see anything funny in the poor policeman being knocked about.' I was only four or five at the time.

When I was six, I was taken to see 'Patience,' and I still retain the clearest recollection of the performance and the performers. I can still see George Grossmith (father of the present comedian) as 'Bunthorne,' and my childish sympathy, for some unknown reason, was given entirely to him, and not at all to Rutland Barrington, the slim and elegant 'Grosvenor.' I always did take the wrong or unpopular side and sympathise with the vanquished instead of rejoicing with the victors. I was really shocked at the disloyalty of 'Lady Angela'—dainty Jessie Bond—and 'Lady Sapphira' towards the poet they had previously professed to adore; and I could not regard 'Lady Jane' as a satisfactory bride for any man. She was far too stout, and in my childhood fatness appalled me.

In Putney, where my mother's parents lived, there was an immensely corpulent newsagent named Patchem, and

for years I used to pray to God every night that he would never make me as fat as Mr. Patchem. My prayer has been granted, for I fancy the danger is now past.

'Patience' I forgave for jilting Bunthorne. I considered she had never really wanted to marry him, and it was natural that she should prefer her old friend Archibald Grosvenor. Besides, Leonora Braham was so beautiful in my eyes that she could do no wrong, I see her now with her milk-pail on her arm—a porcelain lady, but never a rogue. Several years later I got to know the children of Arthur Law, author of *A Country Mouse*, and went to their house to tea. When I was informed that Mrs. Law had been Leonora Braham I was in a state of great excitement. But alas! in the gracious matron who gave us tea I could trace no resemblance to the fairy who had been the divinity of my infancy.

Though I was a year older when I saw 'Iolanthe' at the Savoy Theatre my memory of that performance is much less distinct. I remember that I screamed with laughter at the idea of the very substantial Fairy Queen being able to curl herself up in a buttercup, and that the song which then pleased me most was 'Oh Captain Shaw'—but for the rest my memory is blurred and overlaid by later revivals of the same opera.

When I was eight or nine my cousin Robert Champley of Scarborough took me to the old Gaiety to see 'Little Robin Hood.' I often saw Fred Leslie afterwards, but this was the only time I ever saw Nellie Farren. I always picture her as I saw her in the middle of the stage, with her hands bound behind her—Robin Hood had been captured—singing her ditty while two supers on either side pretended to maltreat her. I thought her perfectly lovely and rejoiced when she escaped. My only other clear memory is of Arthur Williams, as Richard Coeur de Lion, swindling yokels with three thimbles and a pea. I thought this a most undignified thing for a King of England to do.

About the same time, or a little later, my father took me

to the Lyceum to see Irving's 'Faust,' which made a tremendous impression on me and gave me bad dreams for weeks afterwards. For some years I thought Hell was just underneath the stage of the Lyceum.

But these precocious theatre-goings were very rare events, and that no doubt is why I remember them so clearly. I have forgotten dozens of the plays I saw with Jack Beringer. With us playgoing became a weekly habit for a long time, and we went even more often in summer than in winter, because on winter half-holidays I was usually playing football. Jack was a nice little fellow and, though he was three years my junior, we were great chums; but I should be a hypocrite if I attempted to conceal the fact that he was additionally attractive to me as the brother of an infant prodigy. Sometimes he would take me to his home for tea, when I gazed on Vera with a rapture mixed with awe. Vera Beringer was already a celebrity. The talent of her sister Esmé developed later.

I lost sight of Beringer after I left school, but I heard that he had gained a scholarship at St. John's College, Oxford. Towards the end of the Boer War he went out to South Africa, and I hear he is now Native Commissioner at Livingstone, North Rhodesia.

Another boon companion of my youth was F. H. Wilkinson, with whom I 'did a bunk' early one Wednesday in June in order to see the Derby. We had the mortification of seeing the race won by Sir Hugo after we had both backed La Fléche. Wilkinson went to Keble and became a master mariner. As a Commander R.N.V.R. he did good work mine-sweeping during the war, but he hasn't given me a 'tip'—even a wrong 'un—for thirty years. It isn't friendly.

Poor dear Summers! he also went to South Africa. R. H. Summers, one of the best, big, sleepy-eyed, amiable, who would never dream of telling a lie to save himself, but told dozens to oblige me. He was like a big Newfoundland dog, faithful, adoring, confiding: I always felt

I wanted to pat him. How dreadfully I abused his friendship.

Summers was my 'Bunbury'—not in the Whitehall sense, but as in Oscar Wilde's 'Importance of Being Earnest.' Whenever I wanted to do anything I shouldn't, go anywhere I wasn't supposed to go, make an excuse for a not-to-be-explained absence from home, dear old Summers would come to our house and lie like a Trojan.

'Can Frank come back with me to Redhill on Wednesday, Mrs. Rutter?'—'Mother would be awfully glad if you'd let Frank come down to us next week-end.' And so on, and so forth. Summers, whose fair round face reflected the unspotted candour of his soul, was an ideal man for my dirty jobs.

Alas! nothing could cure Summers of his trust in human nature, and in the end it proved fatal. He joined the Rhodesian Light Horse, served with distinction in the Mashona Campaign of '96 and through the Boer War. Then, whilst engaged on special service in the Northern Transvaal, he was treacherously shot on the 1st May, 1900. *Requiescat in pace.* He was a good fellow.

Most of the times I was supposed to be with Summers, I was really with another school friend whom my parents viewed with far less approval. Lest I bring a blush to the cheek of a respectable family I will suppress his surname and allude to him merely as Edgar D.

Edgar was the most extraordinary boy I have ever known, a genius in his way, and had he had a little more luck I am convinced he might have become as famous as Jabez Balfour, Whittaker Wright—or even Horatio Bottomley. He was a year my junior, he was always in a much lower form, and I should never have known him but for the fact that he lived near my own home and for three years we travelled to school together on the old underground from Bishop's Road to Aldersgate station.

My evening excursions with Beringer were limited, more or less, to the legitimate drama. My more clandestine

outings with Edgar were devoted to less classical entertainments. In Eton suits we used to visit the promenades of the Empire and the Pav. At the last we listened with reverential awe in a hushed house—so hushed that you could have heard the proverbial pin drop—to Lottie Collins, high priestess of Bacchus in the nineties, chanting her barbaric hymn 'Ta-ra-ra-Boom-de-aye'; together we solemnly eyed her high-kicking gyrations on the stage. Lottie Collins did not 'give a turn'; she performed a rite, and during her self-conducted service the whole audience was as still and serious as if the music-hall had been a church.

In all my experience of music-halls—and this is pretty considerable since as a still younger boy I can remember the chairman at the Pav. and at the 'Met.' in the Edgware Road, where I heard Charles Coborn sing 'Two Lovely Black Eyes'—I have only known one other performer who had the same grip on a music-hall audience that Lottie Collins had. This was Albert Chevalier, whose perfect rendering of 'My Old Dutch' wrung tears from the most hardened sinners at the London Pavilion.

Soon after Edgar was fifteen his father, a clergyman, obtained a living on the South Coast and deemed it desirable that his precocious son should leave M.T.S. and go to a boarding school in the North of England. Edgar did not regret leaving the school, but he hated leaving London. It seemed very cruel at the time that he should be banished into the country just as we had acquired—with considerable difficulty on my part—the art of swallowing green Chartreuse without choking. Smoking was nothing—we had both smoked regularly, if surreptitiously, since we were fourteen.

Where there's a will there's a way, and Edgar soon discovered a method of releasing himself from the public school in Lancashire to which he had been sent. All he did was to cut out the spiciest stories he could find in the *Pink 'Un* and paste them up on the school notice-board;

but he did this repeatedly and openly till his father was requested to find another sphere for his operations. Next Edgar was sent to a tutor in the West Country. This tutor had a daughter, and Edgar being a very fascinating boy, the girl was so enamoured of his person that her father hurriedly returned Edgar to his parent before three months had elapsed.

After some hesitation it was decided that Edgar might be considered as having finished his education, and since a relative of his was connected with a suburban newspaper, it was arranged for him to enter this office as a junior reporter. Here he remained during the winter of 1893-94, and since sporting events occupied most of his professional efforts, I received wonderful ' notices ' that winter whenever the school fifteen played a match within the area covered by Edgar's newspaper. During the winter Edgar and I often renewed our Saturday evening expeditions to music-halls, and while I was supposed to be spending a domestic evening with poor dear Summers at Redhill, I was really dining at Gatti's with Edgar and going on to a music-hall after.

During the spring I lost sight of Edgar for a few months. I was working for a scholarship at Wadham—which I missed by eight marks—and felt it a duty to deny myself all dissipation ; but after I had been to Oxford and failed, I sent a letter to Edgar at the last address of his I had. It was some time before I got any reply, and then it came in a surprising form.

One Wednesday afternoon—a half-holiday—a brougham and pair drove up to the door of our home, and out stepped my friend Edgar, in a tight-fitting grey frockcoat, with a dazzling silk hat and still more dazzling patent-leather boots. He was a complete man-about-town, an ideal type of a golden youth. He had come to take me to tea at his club—he was already a member of three, one in Albemarle Street, one in Piccadilly, and the third was the never-to-be-forgotten Prince of Wales's Club at the corner of Coventry

Street. Edgar then was not quite seventeen! Of course he looked more; he could pass for twenty-one and did.

That afternoon we had tea in Albemarle Street, and as we drove there I gazed on my friend with astonishment and asked him what had happened. He refused to talk in the brougham, however, and merely puffed away at violet-tipped cigarettes and kept on repeating, 'I've lots to tell you, lots to tell you, but I can't begin here.'

It was over tea and toast at the club that he began to unfold his amazing story. He had quitted journalism, he had no ambition to shine in literature, he had quite simply become a financier. Into my innocent ears he poured a long explanation that it was quite unnecessary to have money: the important thing was to have credit. Without credit you could do nothing: with credit you could do everything. He had begun with his father's eminently respectable tailor in Bond Street.

Edgar's plan of life had the merit of a great simplicity. You borrowed a certain sum, and having got it you spent it: but before you spent the last penny you borrowed double the amount, paid back the first loan, and had the balance to go on with. Having repaid the first loan, you had improved your credit, and it was then easy to borrow from the first lender double the amount of your second loan, pay that back and start on the third round. It sounded so easy the way Edgar put it, that I began to wonder why anybody lived by other means. He talked of his future plans with great enthusiasm, contemplated taking a suite of offices in Broad Street, and calculated that before he was forty he would be able to go bankrupt for a million. By that time he had hoped to put away enough to live on in comfort during an honoured old age.

His talk was rather like a story in the *Arabian Nights*, but Edgar was no mere theorist: he had already begun to put his plan into action. He had started by borrowing eighty pounds and making himself liable to pay a hundred. This amount he had paid by borrowing two hundred pounds

on a promissory note for £250, which was not due till the end of July. And being a cautious, thoughtful lad he was already beginning to negotiate for a loan of five hundred pounds so that, when the time came, he would have no difficulty in paying the £250.

This talk was in about the third week of June, and for the next fortnight Edgar took me about and gave me a very good time. We no longer went about in Eton jackets, but in orthodox evening dress; for our simple meals at Gatti's were substituted lunches at Verrey's or Prince's, dinners at Kettner's or the Savoy, and suppers at the Prince of Wales's. I allowed myself to be put up for membership of the last, and I remained a member of this and its successor the New Lyric for several years. I can say with complete honesty that it is the only club of which I have ever really enjoyed being a member. It was conveniently situated, the rooms were comfortable, the cooking—then—was excellent, the service all to be desired; but apart from and in addition to all the usual appurtenances of a West End club, it had a bijou theatre of its own in which was given each Sunday night an infinitely better variety performance than any to be seen in public houses of entertainment on a week-day.

All the stars of the music-halls and of the musical-comedy stage appeared there one Sunday or the other, and many of them were members. Arthur Roberts was constantly there, and was even funnier in the supper-room than he had been in the theatre. Indeed, after the performance in the theatre was concluded, another and still more select performance used to break out spontaneously while performers and audience were supping together. It was in the supper-room of the Prince of Wales's Club that I learnt to my delight that Connie Ediss talked off the stage exactly the same as she did on—indeed, her great triumph in 'The Shop Girl' at the Gaiety was due to her being perfectly natural. There the Sisters Hengler used to sing 'Hello! Ma Baby' amid frantic applause and calls for encore after encore; and there I was rather shocked to learn that power-

ful as was the voice of Evie Green, it was equalled—on occasion—by her language.

'Floradora' was the great rage that year, and I remember one Sunday evening the complete 'Beauty Chorus' of the Lyric trooped on our bijou stage with their eight attendant cavaliers and gave us that famous double-octette, 'Tell Me, Pretty Maiden, Are There Any More At Home Like you?'

It was at the Prince of Wales's, or rather at the New Lyric as it afterwards became, that I saw the first revue that was a complete success in London. If I remember rightly, it was got up spontaneously and everybody 'gagged,' Arthur Roberts, of course, being *facile princeps*, but my memory of it all is rather confused, the one clear image I have retained being that of 'Tubby' Ponsonby as a drummer boy—that was immense, and so was he!

In addition to his reputable clubs, Edgar was a member of several night-clubs, his favourite being 'The Alsatians,' in Oxford Street. In the nineties night-clubs were very different to what they are now. Nobody took the dancing seriously, and nobody would have condescended to raise dust in a sub-basement and imagine it was a club. Compared to some modern cellars I have visited, the night-clubs of the nineties were palaces. In addition to its ball-room, 'The Alsatians' had a billiard-room with three full-sized tables, an equally large supper-room, and other rooms in which you could write letters or enjoy confidential conversation. The 'New Corinthians,' which occupied a whole house in St. James's Square—now the home of a very respectable club—was still larger.

I also became a member of 'The Alsatians'—as 'Mr. Rutherford'—you didn't give your right name at night-clubs then—and used it chiefly afterwards as one of the sights of London, which I could show to Cambridge friends who were staying with me or in town during the vacations. The 'gay life' very soon palled on me, and I dropped my membership of 'The Alsatians' before I left Cambridge. Still there was one good thing about those old night-clubs.

You knew exactly where you were. None of the women were respectable, and most of the men were. Nowadays you don't know where you are, with the women—or with the men.

But to the Prince of Wales's or New Lyric I hung on right through my years at Cambridge and still went there occasionally much later when I was on the *Daily Mail*. I never pass down Coventry Street now without thinking of the merry nights I have spent in that sad-looking building, and it cuts me to the quick to think that the haunts once devoted to good Bohemians and bacchantes is now a sprawling-ground for mere motorists.

I know not whether other schoolboys of eighteen had so wide and varied an experience of London life as I had—I have never compared notes with others. I had enough sense to keep my mouth shut at school after I perceived that one or two mild tentative ' revelations ' were received with marked distaste by my class-mates—and it is only right to avow that my ' goings-on ' were quite unsuspected by my relatives and friends. In fact, I led a double life.

I have a particular affection for *The Pretty Lady*, by Arnold Bennett, because it is almost the only English novel I know which has the courage to state the supreme ease with which the normal London bachelor glides within an hour from one strata of society to another. I acquired this ease during my ' wild life ' at eighteen.

Many a Sunday I would lunch with my godmother, the beautiful Mrs. Alfred Schiff, in Upper Brook Street, spend the afternoon chatting with her daughters about novels, and then after tea, join my friend Edgar at one of his clubs, and spend the evening talking about musical comedies and varieties to girls of quite another class. So home about midnight in a hansom that went clink-clink, clink-clink, to bed, and—supreme anti-climax !—back to school the next morning.

Anybody with the grace to remember how dear is forbidden fruit to the youthful imagination, should under-

stand my fervent gratitude to Edgar for introducing me to the life of the *demimonde*. To one who had opened so many wonderful doors for me, there was hardly anything I could refuse, so that later on when he asked me, ' just as a matter of form,' if I would back a bill for him, I should have considered myself a churl to meet his request with a blunt negative. I was secretly alarmed and sought to temporize. I had no money, no expectations, I was a younger son, what money-lender would accept me as a guarantor? But Edgar had thought it all out. He knew everything about me. He knew I had had a godfather who had mentioned me in his will. He had been to Somerset House to read that will, and he thought it read very well. I knew there was nothing coming to me but a few trinkets, because the dear man, as an old civil servant, had had only his pension to live on. But it so happened that after making various bequests he had made me his residuary legatee, and this attracted Edgar as a possibility.

He was already in a fix. He could not get his five hundred pounds on his signature alone. The money-lender insisted on having two other signatures as well. Edgar had found a friend ready to become one of the signatories ; this was a man he had met at his Albemarle Street club, Miles O'Connor, an Old Carthusian, a wild Irishman, and one of the best fellows in the world. Till his death he was my best friend.

Miles was the son of an Irish land agent, and his manner of life was simple in the extreme. Once in the twelvemonth he came to London with his year's income in his pocket and had a glorious ' bust ' as long as his money lasted. Then he returned to Ireland, to his hunting, shooting, fishing, and the normal pursuits of an Irish country gentleman. He was twenty-two, he had some land in Ireland which consisted chiefly of a bog—it was described to the money-lender as ' well watered land '—he was prepared to risk losing it for the sake of a few weeks longer in London. He didn't care, so he was quite ready to back a bill for a friend.

At the same time he was no fool. We took a liking to each other as soon as we were introduced, and before long he made an opportunity for us to meet over a quiet dinner at which Edgar was not present. Even then he was, characteristically, more concerned about my risks than his own, and he asked me definitely whether I thought that Edgar had or would have any money.

Now a curious thing is that though I knew his father was only a country vicar with a moderate income, I *did* believe that Edgar would have a few thousands when he came of age. His father was a widower, and when he was only fourteen Edgar used to talk learnedly about a Marriage Settlement, and I had it fixed in my head that he would be coming into money some time, though how much it was to be I did not know. Miles thought that if this were so and if Edgar was to be trusted—which I stoutly maintained —then we might go ahead with the scheme and damn the consequences.

What Edgar told the money-lender about my prospects and expectations I never knew or sought to know—and my participation in the actual business part of the affair was exceedingly brief. M., the money-lender, had an office in Vigo Street. The interview was fixed for a Wednesday morning. I was told I *must* get away from school quick so as to be at Vigo Street not later than 12.45. I made some excuse and got away early to be there on time.

Edgar's brougham was waiting at the door and in it were Miles and himself. We entered the house, went upstairs, and Edgar introduced me to the money-lender. I was very nervous and ill at ease.

The first thing Mr. M. said to me was, ' Ow are yer, my young friend ? '

The second thing was, ' 'Ave a cigar ? ' and he thrust a big box of them at me. I meekly took one and lit it, thanking him. I was more used to cigarettes.

The third thing he said was, ' Vouldn't yer like to buy dis beautiful diamond scarf-pin ? ' And he handed me

the horror. This I politely but very firmly declined, and after he had made two other attempts to sell me jewellery, he proceeded to the business of the day.

'Vell,' he said, 've don't vant no fuss, do ve?'

'Yer don't vant me to ask yer a lot of questions? Yer don't vant me to go to yer fader and ask him how old yer vas?'

'Certainly not,' I said.

'No, of course yer don't. But yer don't consider *me*. Now I 'ave ter be careful. Before ve do any business ve must 'ave a clear understanding. Now are ve acting on de understanding dat ye're of age? Yes or no?'

'Ye-yes,' I stammered.

'Vell,' he said, 'dat's all right as long as ve know. But, just as a matter of form, I must ask you to sign dis paper to say ve're acting on dat understanding.'

'Oh, certainly,' said I. It seemed a reasonable request and I signed without thinking.

'Now ve're all straight,' he continued, 'all ve got to do is to sign de bill. Dat's vere you sign, Mr. D.'

Edgar signed.

'Dat's vere you sign, Mr. O'Connor.'

Miles signed.

'And dat's vere you sign, Mr. Rutter.'

I signed.

'And now all I got to do is to give yer de money.' He handed Edgar £400 in notes. We had signed a bill for £500 payable three months after date. And the date was 9th July, 1904. I have never forgotten it. 'It's a lovely scarf-pin,' said the Jew, brandishing it at me again, but it did not tempt me. We had got all we wanted, so we shook hands with him and left. It was not much after one o'clock when we were all three in the street again.

Now of that £400 Edgar had to pay out £250 to redeem his second bill. Ten pounds he gave to me, for obliging him in the matter of the signature—'purely as a matter of form'—and twenty pounds he 'lent' to Miles. The rest

he put in his pocket. But then he liked to do the paying, and he entertained us royally. We all went to lunch at Verrey's, and about three o'clock Edgar left us to call on one of his ' lady-friends.'

Miles and I strolled about Regent Street and Bond Street, and went and ate raspberries and cream at ' The Bungalow ' in Conduit Street and flirted with the waitress. Then we went to the Prince of Wales's Club, played a lazy game of billiards and had tea and teacakes. Afterwards we went to Edgar's rooms (over Fortnum & Mason's shop in Piccadilly), where I often kept my dress suit and changed. Edgar gave us a special dinner—with 1820 port, I remember—in the Cabin room at the P.O.W., and we went to see Hayden Coffin in ' The Gaiety Girl,' next door to the club. After that we had devilled kidneys at the Savoy, and then we went on to the Alsatians. Miles and I were great on the Lancers —' Kitchen-Lancers ' they were called then; Scullery would have been still more appropriate—but Edgar, like the ' Tenth,' didn't dance, I fancy he thought it undignified for a financier. At two in the morning we had another supper: we seem to have eaten an awful lot that day.

It hardly seemed worth while going to bed. Fortunately I had a latchkey, so there was no hurry. Miles thought sleep would be a waste of time also. So between 3 and 4 a.m. I persuaded Miles to come back with me. We drove home, I opened the door gently, and we crept down to the billiard-room, where we knocked the balls about till six or seven. As soon as the servants came down we got them to give us some breakfast.

My parents breakfasted late and always had it in their bedroom, in the Continental style, so the coast being clear it was not difficult for me to slip out again in the morning. Miles had the job of smuggling out my evening clothes, and the still harder one of smuggling in the suit I had left at Edgar's rooms. This we could never have managed without the aid of a confederate. But juvenile offenders are usually fortunate in finding accomplices. Maid-

servants seem to take a special delight in the depravity of their young masters, and I never lacked a friendly housemaid or parlourmaid who would help me to deceive my parents.

For about six weeks I led a life of what the moralist would term 'gilded sin,' I suppose, though there was far more foolishness than sinning, and the gilt was very thin. At the end of July Miles went back to Ireland, and soon afterwards I went down to Devonshire with my people. Before we left London we had both made Edgar understand that neither of us were going to back any more bills for him. But to do him justice, he did not ask us to do so. He had another and an older man in tow then, and was serenely confident that with F.'s co-operation he would carry through a loan of a thousand which he was negotiating with the Scottish Widows. We were not to worry, he would meet the £500 bill in October all right.

As a matter of fact, I had so complete a confidence in Edgar's ability that I did not worry, and dismissed the thing pretty well from my mind—though conscience pricked me periodically—till in September I got a letter from Miles saying he had heard that Edgar's £1,000 scheme had fallen through. His man F. had jibbed and refused to sign a document at the last minute, just as everything was ready for the loan to go through.

This was in the middle of September. Alarmed I wrote off at once to Edgar asking him what had happened and was it all right about the bill. A few days later I got his reply. It was true: F. had 'been a fool' and had refused to sign at the last minute. But I was not to worry. He would find somebody else and when the loan went through he would immediately redeem the bill with my name on it. Meanwhile, he admitted, he was rather in a fix and in want of ready money.

'My cheques are being merrily returned to me,' he concluded, 'thereby gaining me inexhaustible credit and universal esteem.'

Edgar was a marvellously light-hearted fellow!

I sent this letter on to Miles. He acknowledged it briefly and said he was coming over from Ireland to investigate. Some days later Miles wrote to me from London, saying he had searched the town for Edgar, could not find him, and had had no replies to his last letters and telegrams. He urged me strongly to join him in London at once. Matters were very serious.

Now it is a curious thing that while I remember vividly every little thing connected with the ninth of July—even to the Christian name, Grace, of the waitress at 'The Bungalow'—I cannot for the life of me recall what lies I told or what excuses I made to get away from Devonshire. I rather fancy that I must have gone to London first and explained afterwards, for all I can remember is that being absolutely broke I had to leave my watch with the station-master at Exeter in order to get a ticket to London. Miles met me at Paddington, and lent me the money to get my watch back.

Together we searched London for Edgar. We looked up all his pet girls, we called on everyone we knew had known him, we enquired at his clubs, his favourite haunts, and his lodgings—where he left an unpaid bill. Nobody had seen him for days, nobody knew where he was, nobody knew anything about him. At last, one day an envelope arrived at the club with a pencilled note inside, no address, nothing but :

'I'm sorry. I'm off. Do the best you can for yourselves.' The game was up. We heard later that Edgar had been shipped off to one of the colonies by his father. We never heard which for certain. That was the last letter either of us received from him, and I have never again set eyes on the fascinating and ingenious Edgar.

'What are we going to do ?' I asked Miles.

'Well, I shall go bankrupt,' said Miles. 'One Irish bankrupt more or less won't make any difference,' he added with humorous philosophy. He didn't worry about himself, but he was anxious about me. He said at once,

rightly, that there was only one thing for me to do : I must tell my father. Then he asked me whether I would like him to wait and see my father for me and break the news to him. I said no, that would only make things worse. So Miles went back to Ireland to await the inevitable.

My chief difficulty was that my father was still in Devonshire and I could not bring myself to interrupt his holiday or attempt to explain in a letter all the complicated business in which I had become involved. I was at my wit's end. I was alone in the house, but for two servants. I had no friend to whom I could turn. I was profoundly miserable. And meanwhile the days were speeding on.

Suddenly, like an inspiration, it came to me one morning, that I had heard my father speak in the highest terms of his friend, Mr. G., whom he esteemed both as a man and as a lawyer. I had met Mr. G. once or twice and liked him : it would be easier to tell the whole business calmly to him than to my father. I determined to tell it all to Mr. G. if he would give me a hearing.

I went straight off to Gray's Inn. Mr. G. was in, fortunately he was not busy—or said he wasn't—he received me with the utmost kindness and listened with patience to my story. When it was over he asked me two questions.

'When do you expect your father back ?'

'On the 28th September, sir,' I replied.

'And when did you say the promissory note fell due ?'

'On October 9th.'

'Oh, plenty of time,' he said soothingly. 'You did quite right not to write to your father. Let him finish his holiday.' Then he proceeded to talk to me. He did not mince matters, and he threw quite a new light on my folly. Hitherto I had thought of nothing but the financial aspect of the affair. I had made myself liable for £500, Edgar had vanished, Miles's little estate he valued at £200 at the most, and I imagined that my father would have to pay the balance or something like it. Mr. G. soon relieved me

of this anxiety, but he put another in its place. He didn't care twopence about my signature on the three months' bill, but he regarded my signature on the other piece of paper as a very serious matter.

'There's no question of a civil action,' he said, 'M. wouldn't have a leg to stand on. But there will be a threat of a criminal action. That will be his game. Don't you see what you've done, my boy? You have signed a solemn declaration that you are of age, when you know you are only eighteen. By that statement money has been obtained. You are liable to be charged with obtaining money by false pretences, or even with conspiracy to defraud. It's not a question of your father having to pay £500 or any part of it: the question is whether we can save you from having to go to prison.'

This was a new view with a vengeance. It had never occurred to me. I felt sick. I suppose I went white.

'There, there,' said Mr. G. 'There's no need to faint. I've told you the worst, but I don't anticipate it will come to that. You didn't sign any other papers? Good, well that one isn't much to go upon. Your friend O'Connor's all right because he has told no lies, I gather. Edgar D.—who must be a precious young scoundrel—has told a good many I expect, but as he is out of the country I don't see that they will prejudice your case. The case against you, a mere schoolboy, would not be a pretty one to bring into court: M. will bluff, of course, men like that calculate on fathers stripping their shirt off their backs to prevent a prosecution, but we can bluff too. Now, listen to me.'

'Yes, Mr. G.'

'You know very well you will never be able to tell your story clearly and calmly to your father as you've told it to me. You'll make a dreadful mess of it, and he won't be able to understand a word. You go straight home and write it all out just as you've told it to me. Don't excuse yourself, and don't accuse yourself. Leave all that out and stick to the facts. Do you understand me?'

'Yes, Mr. G.'

'Very well then, when you have written it out and read it through and signed it, put it in an envelope and stick it down. Then the first morning after your father has come back—not the night he arrives—give him first this note that I am going to give you to take back. When he has read my note, give him your envelope, and then go out of the room and don't bother him till he sends for you. Later on he will probably bring you to see me again.'

He wrote the note and handed it to me. 'You've been a precious young fool, but you know it and there's no need for me to say it. Still, you've done one sensible thing in coming to me about it. Your father will like that.' He patted me on the shoulder and so dismissed me.

I went home and did exactly as he told me. Should I be ashamed to confess that as I wrote out the story of my folly and deceit, big boy that I was, I cried bitterly and the tears streamed down my face? What had I done? and for what? For a few weeks of very third-rate pleasures I was going to give terrible grief and anxiety to those who loved me and whom I loved. I needed nobody to tell me I had had my lesson.

Yet out of evil sometimes comes good. When it was all over my father and I were more intimate and understanding friends than we had ever been before. There were no longer any barriers between us—but my childhood was past.

I had to miss a term at school—and that missed term delayed my going to the University for another year. I was sent on the Continent for three months while Mr. G. dealt with the money-lender who, as he expected, threatened to prosecute me for obtaining money under false pretences. Finally, the incriminating document with my signature was bought up for thirty pounds, I think, certainly more than I had ever received from Edgar. I was free to return to England and school.

My Irish friend's bankruptcy was also no unmixed evil.

He did not want to be a farmer, he did not really care for the life of a land agent. For all the recklessness that broke out in him at times, he was *au fond* a scholar, and had kept up his classics after leaving Charterhouse. Some time after his bankruptcy he left Ireland and obtained a position as a master at one of the best boys' schools at Oxford. While teaching there, he entered a college as an undergraduate, passed his examinations, and remained at Oxford as a master and lecturer till the end of his days. He settled down, married, but possibly paid the penalty for youthful imprudence after all, since he was still a young man when he fell a victim to phthisis.

Why have I told this long rigmarole? Most certainly it is not because I am proud of the sorry part I played in the whole affair. Nor can I honestly say that I have told it as a warning to others, for I gravely question whether anybody can possibly derive real profit from the experience of another. Each one of us has to find out for ourselves what is good and what is evil—that is, if we are ever to know. And if we are consumed with the devouring thirst for forbidden knowledge, perhaps the sooner we get it over the better. Who knows? Possibly the fact that I did make so big a fool of myself while still a schoolboy, prevented me from making a still bigger fool of myself while I was at Cambridge.

No, there is nothing to brag about in this sordid recital. But once a man begins talking about himself I conceive he can do no less than tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. That is the only adequate apology he can make for thrusting his private affairs in the face of a long-suffering public.

And since the whole truth has got to be told, I must confess that this is not all. During my last year at school, a lonely horrible year, when my friends had left and most of them were already at Oxford or Cambridge, when as I jumped on an omnibus or dived into the underground I tried to forget that a few months back I had been luxuriously

rolling round London in Edgar's unpaid-for brougham, I thought continually of the strangeness of the life I had led for those few months and of the contrast it presented to the life I had been living before and since. I wanted to tell people about it. I wanted to write. I believed—and it was long before the delusion perished—that I had discovered my true path in life. I would be a novelist. I saw my first book being fashioned from my experiences of the year before, and I saw its title in gilt letters flaring from a crimson cover :

'THREE MONTHS AFTER DATE'

I began that novel before I was nineteen, I wrote many chapters, and cherished them as a secret vice all the years I was at Cambridge. But I never finished it. In time I came to see how dreadfully bad it was, and ruthlessly committed my labour to the flames. But from time to time the old desire revived within me. Always, always, I have wanted, as they say, to put Edgar in a book.

I have done it at last.

## III

## CAMBRIDGE AND KITCHENER

A DISTINGUISHED contemporary, who was slightly senior to me both at M.T.S. and Queens', Cambridge, is Charles Herbert Reilly, Roscoe Professor of Architecture at Liverpool University. Though I had respect for him as a Monitor, I am afraid I never detected the seeds of future greatness in either the schoolboy or the undergraduate, and I suppose the fact is I did not know where to look.

There is a curious disproportion in the glory attached to certain scholastic achievements and, though the idea certainly never occurred to me at the time, it does seem strange to me now that while the whole college went mad with delight because our W. G. Fraser was Senior Wrangler in 1896, nobody, so far as I know, thought Reilly had done anything wonderful in getting a First Class in the Engineering Tripos of the same year. I certainly have been surprised to see this quiet, unassuming student develop into one of the most influential, most original—and dare I add, most autocratic—architects of his age. But I also, in my humble way, have surprised Reilly by popping up as a critic of his own art. So we are about quits.

I have nothing to say against him—except this. Some years ago I gave a lecture at Liverpool and Reilly was my chairman. This is how he introduced me :

'When I knew Mr. Rutter at Cambridge in 1896 he was considered to be interested in another art than painting, namely music. He was an expert on the banjo.'

There's a nice thing to say ! That is how an old schoolfellow undermines your reputation by exploding a dreadful secret of your past. And the worst thing about it is that the horrid accusation was true. I am a reformed character now ; but once I was banjoist. I lived in aesthetic sin with that instrument—if so it can be called—for something like ten years. Of course, like every other amateur I have ever known, I got disgusted with it at last, partly for its want of the sustained note, but still more because it seems to be almost impossible to play with any satisfaction on the banjo any music that will really stand the test of time. In maturity I find it vastly more satisfying to put a Kreisler or Heifetz record on the gramophone than to play ' The Darkey's Dream ' on a banjo.

Still, I must not be ungrateful. Any social success I had at Cambridge I owed entirely to my banjo. My banjo brought me popularity among undergraduates and discredited me with the Dons. Two birds with one ' plunk.' It enabled me in my third year to see my acquaintances mounting well up into four figures. It brought me invitations from and introduced me, as a participant, into the smoking-concerts of pretty nearly every college. My banjo caused me to be elected Secretary of my College Musical and Debating Society in my second year. It took me outside Cambridge into the villages around and enlarged my acquaintance with such members of the county as organised ' penny readings ' and similar entertainings. It gave me dancing partners who played the mandoline and wanted to practice duets. One thing led to another—instrumental duets to mixed hockey. In short, my banjo gave me a label ; it made a somebody of a nonentity. It even caused me to be regarded for several weeks as a personal friend of Lord Kitchener. This is how that came about.

The two most notable events during my four years at Cambridge were the notorious ' Degrees for Women ' rag—of which I will say nothing except that T. F. R. Macdonnell

of St. John's, the brilliantly eloquent champion of feminism, was my friend and had my sympathy, though not, I fear, my very active support—and the visit in 1898 of Lord Kitchener of Khartoum fresh from his triumphs in the Soudan. The poor man had a terrible time of it, but took all the ragging with extraordinary good temper. The proceedings began with the unhorsing of a number of the mounted policemen who formed his escort from the station to the Senate House. Most of this 'horse-play' occurred in St. Andrew's Street, just outside the gates of Downing College.

From the Senate House, Kitchener was dragged in his carriage by a howling mob of undergraduates, who slapped him on the back and shouted, 'Well rowed, sir, well rowed.' By the time he reached Christ's College, where he was to have lunch with the Vice-Chancellor, nearly all the feathers in his Field Marshal's cocked hat had been plucked out as souvenirs. And then the mob surrounded him yelling 'Speech, Speech, Speech,' and refused to let him leave the carriage till the request had been satisfied. At last Kitchener got up with a weary smile, and the moment he was on his feet there was complete silence.

'Gentlemen,' he said in resonant tones, 'I thank you for this reception, this very warm reception. It was hot in the Soudan—but you are making it hotter for me here.'

There was an explosive roar of laughter. K. of K. had struck the right note, the assembly gave him three cheers and then dispersed to let him have his lunch in peace.

Later in the afternoon Kitchener came to the Debating Hall of the Union Society and made a stirring appeal in aid of funds for the Gordon Memorial College at Khartoum. Now at that time I had a passion for organizing, of which years of art exhibitions have not altogether cured me. Here was an opportunity. Somebody ought to organize a concert in aid of Khartoum College. And who should do it but me? My idea was a concert entirely by undergraduates, and I hastened to enlist the support of H. W. Brodie of Clare, the bright particular star of 'The Footlights' and

far and away the best comedian who was up in my time. Then I went to my friend Cyril Broxholm of Trinity, who was an admirable pianist and sang coster songs under the name of 'Fred Kyrle.' But Broxholm had big ideas, we were to make it a 'slap-up' show and import professionals from London. I protested mildly that in that case all profits were likely to be swallowed up in the expenses, but Broxholm denied this. He knew all the big people, they would come for him for nothing, or next to nothing, it was merely a matter of fares. Against my better judgment I allowed myself to be over-persuaded. Broxholm said he would see to the professionals, and I was to see to everything else.

Having booked the Victoria Assembly Rooms for a definite date, the first thing I did was to send a long wire to Lord Kitchener explaining what we were doing and asking him if he would be a patron. Back came the wire :

RUTTER, QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

ACCEPT WITH PLEASURE. WISH YOUR CONCERT ALL SUCCESS.

KITCHENER.

Posted up in the window of the music-shop in K.P., where the tickets for our concert were being sold, this telegram caused crowds to assemble. Innocent undergraduates used to come up to me during the next few days with, 'I say, Rutter, what's Kitchener like when you really know him ?'

On Saturday, 10th September, the concert was duly given, and if, in the result, Khartoum College gained little by our efforts, the hall was filled and all who came seemed satisfied. The Vice-Chancellor took tickets and didn't come : the Mayor took tickets and did. The applause was long and uproarious ; and all the performers felt that they were doing good—to themselves. Broxholm thoroughly enjoyed himself and rushed on to take his encores with a sighed 'They *will* have me' worthy of a veteran professional. The undergraduate element had been reduced to four ; Brodie, Broxholm, myself and Ernest Wethered of

Pembroke, the best amateur conjuror I have ever seen. This paucity of undergraduate talent was atoned for by our importations, among whom were Miss Isabel Hirschfeld the pianist, and her sister May the violinist. But from a popular standpoint the great hit of the entertainment was Mr. Fred Upton, the *raconteur*.

Surely somebody must remember Fred Upton, the most polished society entertainer of the nineties. With a sad weary look on his face which scarcely altered, he would stand up on a platform or in a drawing-room and reel off screamingly funny stories told with admirable subtlety and accentuation. He was just as amusing in private as in his public performances. He told me he liked coming to Cambridge because it was the only place where he could blaspheme in comfort. When I asked him how that was, he said, ' Well, I just stand outside the Post Office here and ask people what the college opposite is. They tell me, and then I say " Oh Christ ! " but nobody takes any notice.'

It was Upton who popularised, during one of his early visits, a form of practical humour which Barry Pain has exploited in one of his books. Briefly, this consisted of going into a shop and ' taking a rise ' out of the proprietor or shopman. In these exploits Upton had many imitators but no equals. I wish I could remember more of the things he did and said which amused us mightily at Cambridge, but there is only one that sticks in my memory.

Walking with Broxholm and myself one afternoon through Rose Crescent, he suddenly stopped outside a music-shop which used to be there. Inside a rather bumptious assistant was giving a florid performance on a piano. ' Come along,' said Upton, ' I want to go in here.' He marched through the door and straight up the length of the shop till he got to the assistant, who had meanwhile jumped to attention. ' Ha ! hum ! ' said Upton in his best ' county ' manner, ' do you—er, ah—tune pianos ? ' ' Yes sir, oh yes sir, we tune pianos,' said the now obsequious assistant. ' Then,' quoth Upton, relapsing into his ordinary voice,

'*Why the devil don't you tune the one you were playing on.*' And he turned on his heel and marched out of the shop.

To go about with a man like that was better than a pantomime.

One of Upton's favourite stories might appropriately be revived now for the Southern Railway, though he told it of the old London Chatham and Dover. In a fit of depression a station-master on that line, he told us, determined to commit suicide. So at 3.40 one afternoon, two minutes before the 3.42 express was due from Dover, he went out and laid himself down on the line, and eventually died—*of starvation.*

Another of his stories that I remember concerned a very mean mistress who starved her general servant. At last the girl could stand it no longer and said she would have to leave. 'Oh! why is that, Mary?' asked the mistress. 'Well, Mum, I'm afraid my eyesight is going. I can hardly see the meat on my plate.' 'Oh don't do anything in a hurry,' replied the mistress, 'perhaps your eyesight will improve.' For the next day or two the mistress was very careful with her carving: she didn't give the servant any larger amount of food, but she cut the meat very thin and spread it about to make it look more. Later on she asked Mary how her eyesight was. 'It's improved wonderful, mum,' was the reply. 'Now I can see the plate through the meat.'

Yes, Upton was a good entertainer, but his stories hardly harmonised with Miss Hirschfeld's Chopin. Altogether it was the weirdest programme I have ever seen presented to an audience, classical music and coster songs, violin solos and banjo solos, a soprano and funny stories, a tenor and conjuring. Certainly we gave our patrons variety, and our only serious omission was in failing to get Curtis-Bennett of Trinity to do a trick-cycle act.

Prof. Reilly is not the only one who can let the cat out of the bag. Who to look at the portly figure of Sir Henry Curtis-Bennett, K.C., would imagine that he was once a

racing cyclist, and got his half-blue for cycling at Cambridge ? I'm glad I got to know Curtis-Bennett, though, of course, I had no idea he would become a greater lawyer than his father. His father was a very popular magistrate, and magistrates are people to keep in with ; but a great counsel is even better. If ever I have the misfortune to be accused of a murder, I look to Sir Henry to defend me for auld lang syne. Certainly, I could not hope to secure his services in any other way.

Next to the Kitchener and ' Women's Degrees ' rags, the outstanding event of my years at Cambridge was Fletcher's ' Funeral.' Nigel Corbet Fletcher, the Rugby Blue and International, was with me both at M.T.S. and Queens'. His being sent down for a term was very unfair and unjust, as I think was generally recognised afterwards.

The men of my year at Queens' abounded in lively spirits, and were prone to display their exuberance in bonfires and fireworks on the slightest excuse. The match with Worcester, Oxford, was our chief Rugby event of the year, and the authorities guessed that if Queens' won there would probably be strange lights in the Courts that night. So they took an extraordinary precaution to damp our squibs. On the morning of the match Fletcher, as captain of our team, was sent for and solemnly warned that he would be held responsible for order in the college, and that if there was any serious disturbance he would be sent down. I suppose it was thought that Fletcher's popularity was such that even the wilder men would abstain from doing anything which might get him into trouble : it seems a strange argument, but I cannot perceive any other justification whatever.

The match was played and Worcester was beaten. Fletcher went to the station to see our visitors off, which as captain for the hosts he could hardly avoid doing, and while he was out of the college the bonfire and fireworks were started. Early the next morning Fletcher was sent for and told he must leave Cambridge not later than two o'clock that afternoon.

Though conscious that he was a scapegoat and smarting keenly under the sense of injustice, Fletcher was all for making his exit quietly. He didn't want a fuss made. He refused point blank to ride to the station in a hearse. After a lot of pressing he assented to this much: that instead of driving straight to the station he would start earlier and drive first to the Post Office and buy some stamps, and would then go stationwards *via* St. Andrew's Street. And he would tell his cabman to drive slowly. That was all he would do; and for the rest we could please ourselves whether, and if so how, we saw him off.

That was enough. Half-a-dozen of us formed ourselves into an Emergency Committee. The news spread like wildfire round the town. All available wheeled vehicles were secured and instructed to form up in line in Silver Street not later than one o'clock. Meanwhile there was a great rush on the drapers for crape. Remembering my conjuring friend at Pembroke, I rushed round to Wethered and borrowed his opera-hat, which, plentifully adorned with crape and supported by my evening trousers and a black jacket, turned me into a passable understudy of a mute. Others did likewise.

About 1.15 Fletcher came out and got into his hansom, rather embarrassed at the cheering and 'all the fuss.' The drivers needed no instruction, they knew their business. To the doleful strains of the Funeral March the long procession started at an aged snail's pace, along King's Parade, across Market Hill, through Petty Cury to the Post Office, thence up St. Andrew's Street to the station. Fletcher had a good send-off, and on the way back the crowd demonstrated with boos and groans outside the house of the don who was suspected of being the chief cause of his being sent down.

Fletcher was allowed to come up again the next term, and though it delayed his taking his degree his unjust punishment did him no harm otherwise. It did far more harm to the college and seriously damaged the popularity

of our President, Dr. Ryle, the late Dean of Westminster. This was the more to be regretted, because it was the only act of flagrant injustice which came to my notice during my four years at the college.

Undergraduates know very little of inner councils of their college, and it is very possible that in this matter Dr. Ryle, who was then new to the Presidency, allowed himself to be overruled by some member or members who had been longer at Queens'. Personally I cannot associate Bishop Ryle with any unfairness. I was in a number of scrapes myself, twice accused of serious insubordination, and there was certainly one don who, I imagine, would have seen me leave Cambridge before my time without regret. I did not like him, and he knew it. But when Dr. Ryle examined my alleged offences, I always found him to be scrupulously just; he would listen patiently to anything I had to say—which all dons will not do—he was willing to consider any evidence I could bring forward for my defence, and only after exhausting all the pros and cons would he give his matured judgment.

I soon found out that if trouble was looming ahead the best thing to do was to go straight to the President and make a clean breast of it, tell him how it had happened, and he would understand. Ryle was not a hard man on youthful folly, and if he was convinced that you really meant no harm, he would be merciful. This much it seems necessary to say, since I have related the Fletcher episode. Of course, the initial error was in the solemn warning. Under any circumstances it is ridiculous to make one man responsible for the good behaviour of a whole college. But once having made this false step, then—if any discipline was to be maintained—I fail to see what any Head of a College could do but send the man down, even though his actual innocence was patent. To be made an example of, though sometimes unfair to the example, is often salutary to the community.

I fear I may be giving a very wrong impression of the

way in which I spent my time at Cambridge. My life there was very far from being one long succession of ' rags ' and smoking-concerts ; indeed, the former live in my memory largely because they were exceedingly rare. But, as many novelists have found out to their cost, nothing is more difficult than to convey to one who has not had the experience, the life of an undergraduate at an English university. The difficulty lies partly in the fact that, owing to the considerable amount of liberty permitted to boys who have only just left school, different undergraduates, according to their tastes and temperaments, lead all sorts of different lives at Oxford and Cambridge. There are a few things all must share in common—lectures, dinners in Hall, and Deans—but, for the rest, the undergraduate is free to pick and choose.

I will confess at once that, so far as my ' subject ' was concerned, I did very little work at Cambridge. If I did two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening on four days of the week, that is about the highest average I can justly claim. Just before an examination one might put on steam, cram in ten, twelve or more hours work into the day and night ; but these bursts of industry never lasted long and were made up for by days on end during which one did no work at all.

But if I did so little work, I did an immense amount of reading. My average must have been fully four or five books a week through all the four years I was at Cambridge, and by no means all of the books were novels. I still kept up my general history and picked at other subjects. Looking back, it amazes me to think how I made so much time for reading, since in those days I was decidedly a sociable person. But I always read in bed at night, often in the mornings—when I ought to have been reading something quite different—and in summer it was pleasant to laze away an afternoon with a book in a Canadian canoe.

Normally my life was something like this. Breakfast, any time between eight and ten—it depended on what I

had been doing the night before. About twice a week I would have a guest or guests to breakfast in my rooms; and about twice a week I would go to breakfast with a friend. After breakfast came lectures, and in my first year I sometimes had to 'keep' nine o'clock lectures. Later I managed things better and contrived that I rarely had more than two lectures to attend any morning, either from ten to eleven, eleven to twelve, or twelve to one. The time before, between and after lectures was usually spent in 'messing about'; going into the Junior Common Room to read the newspapers, looking up somebody who was also not working, writing a letter, shopping, strolling about the streets, or inveigling a friend to join one in a 'morning coffee.'

One o'clock or soon after was lunch time, and if breakfast was a substantial meal, with two courses as a rule, luncheon was a Spartan affair. Except on Sunday I hardly ever had a friend to lunch or went out to lunch. Bread and cheese, followed by bread and jam, and the whole washed down with half-a-pint of beer—this constituted the average lunch of the normal undergraduate. I had already got into certain continental habits, so I usually made black coffee for myself; but few men I knew took the trouble to do this. Lunch was something to be got over quickly, for after it came the serious business of the day.

Apart from a few science men, who went to the 'labs,' I never knew an undergraduate who worked in the early afternoon. The hours between lunch and tea were sacred to sport, or at least exercise. Even the most confirmed 'swot,' aiming at a first class and eschewing all games, would go for a country walk after lunch. What one did in the afternoon depended on one's aptitudes and the time of year.

Cricket had never at any time appealed to me, and serious rowing was too much like hard work to please an idler; so in summer I did nothing more strenuous than play lawn-tennis or sprawl in a canoe on the Backs. But

Rugby was a game I had always enjoyed—and two out of the three terms of the year were ' footer ' terms. I played pretty regularly, but I should have been a more reliable member of the Fifteen had I not frequently succumbed to the rival attractions of a mixed hockey club to which I belonged. There were some very nice girls in it. At least once a week I mounted my bicycle and rode over to Histon or Milton to play a leisurely, exceedingly unorthodox, but most enjoyable game of hockey. Whoever ' picked up ' the sides, we always managed to get paired off nicely, and nothing interrupted the conversation of the backs except an occasional rush. Then something like the following occurred :

' I thought it frightfully good—Oh, here's the ball coming. You take it.'—' Oh no, Mr. Rutter, you'd better take it.'—' Nonsense, you can do it all right.'—' Oh dear, now she's got it.'—' Hard luck ! Never mind. Well, as I was saying, I thought it frightfully good . . . '

Mixed hockey is played much more seriously now, I gather, but I am sure the players can't get more real fun out of the game then we did. Afterwards we all went back to the house of one of the married members and had tea.

I owed my introduction to these delightful gatherings to my cousin, Roberta Champley, who had married the Rev. J. P. Whitney, then Rector of Milton and a Fellow of King's. Through these kind hospitable cousins and their numerous friends, I had a widely ranging social life in the districts round Cambridge, such as falls to the lot of very few undergraduates. Still even so, these excursions to Milton and Histon were exceptional, and more often I spent the afternoon in the normal occupation of other undergraduates.

After the game of tennis or after the Rugger match came tea, and there is nothing to which I look back with greater longing than those teas. The meal itself was simple enough : one made tea, one had a box of biscuits, a cake and

cigarettes—that sufficed. It was not the food and drink but the comradeship and the talk that made these teas so precious to memory. A ' bunch ' of good fellows and good talk—what more does one want. We discussed everything, we frivolled and we were serious, we scored off each other, and we learnt from each other, we widened our sympathies and enlarged our minds. These talks at tea-time, and in the evenings, are the most precious and incommunicable part of a university education. At last it was time to tear one's self away and change for Hall. Occasionally, too, there was a lecture at five o'clock, but this was a rarity which only became serious in your third or fourth year.

To dine out of college was also an exceptional thing. Occasionally one had Hall with a friend in another college, now and then somebody came of age and gave a dinner in his rooms or a restaurant, but invitations to dinner were events. After Hall either some men came to your rooms for coffee, or you went to coffee with someone. Now and again, for a change, coffee might be taken in the town. After coffee there was a pretence—sometimes the reality—of working for a couple of hours : but if you did work, about 10.30 or 11 p.m. either somebody dropped in to look you up, or you felt constrained to go and see how So-and-So was getting on—and so the talk began again.

Often there was not even a pretence of working after Hall. One went out deliberately to spend an evening with friends. I would go, for example, to Broxholm's rooms in Bridge Street and there would be music. Cohen of Trinity would come in and bring down the house by his wizard-like rendering of Thalberg's ' Home Sweet Home with Variations.' Or at Black's rooms in Little St. Mary's Lane we would go right through one of the Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas with our Welsh friend Lloyd Evans—good old ' Llan,' here's to you !—singing the chief parts with the same magnificent gusto and assurance as he played half-back. Or round at Caius my old school-friend G. F. White would play Handel's ' Largo ' on his 'cello—for

banjoist though I might be, I had friends who were capable of higher things.

Three or four times a year I may have played a game of billiards, but I never once played cards. Normally the evenings passed in music or talk. Occasionally, but not every week, I would go to the Union and listen to a debate, and once a fortnight during the winter there would be the Debating Society of my own college to attend. In my second and third years I was performing practically two winter nights out of the seven every week at the ' smoker ' of some college or other, with occasional excursions to village concerts.

Then there was the theatre. That occupied about one evening a week—and incidentally filled up many afternoons. For I was not content to see people on the stage, I wanted to know some of them off. In this ambition I was greatly helped by my friend W. E. H. Humphrys, also of Queens' and the same year as myself.

Humphrys not only shared my passion for the stage, but wrote dramatic criticisms for an undergraduate journal. No doubt it was a desire to be first with the news that stirred him so often to meet theatrical companies on their arrival at the station. We had rivals on the platform, but Humphrys's semi-official status gave us an immense advantage and—it is extraordinary to reflect now—I never once remember our having been snubbed. I expect the experienced professionals saw at once that we were quite harmless—and harmless it all was though it flattered us when the ' unco' guid ' took us to be regular devils.

It was at Cambridge station that I made the acquaintance of Miss Constance Collier. While Humphrys ' interviewed ' her, I saw to the luggage. We were rewarded afterwards by her coming to lunch with us and permitting us to show her the colleges. And that was what all this theatrical business amounted to—a few bouquets with green and white ribbons, to uphold the glory of our college, a few lunches and teas to make other fellows sick with

envy, and a parade round the colleges for the instruction of our visitors and the greater glory of our little selves.

I remember Constance Collier particularly well, not only because I saw her afterwards and admired even then the finished perfection of her acting, but because we both had in common a great admiration for the novels of Robert Hichens. We talked books incessantly, I remember, during her three days' stay in Cambridge, and I showed her the Library at the Union and borrowed a book for her—which, of course, I had to replace. What a library I should have if all the books I have lent had been returned to me. I shall never quite forgive Dorothy Massingham for losing a first edition of *The Wings of the Dove*. But that was long after my Cambridge days.

Besides Constance Collier, our visitors at Cambridge included Ida Molesworth, a great personal friend ever since I saw her vivacious rendering of the leading part in 'A Lady of Quality,' Lydia Flopp—Letty Lind's clever sister—Mabel Hackney, who afterwards married Lawrence Irving, and a host of others whose names are not likely to be familiar to the reader.

It is due to myself to state that, notwithstanding all this 'running about after girls,' I cannot remember that I was ever seriously in love with an actress—at least, not since I was eighteen. Then for a time I was mad about a dancer who had been in the *pas de quatre* at the Gaiety, and I incommoded myself by going to school with one of her handkerchiefs knotted round my arm as a proof of my devotion. I must have tried the patience sorely of a few intimate chums by pestering them to admire her photograph. But it didn't last long—about three months, I think. That summer my father chartered a twenty-ton cutter, and in the delights of my first experience of yachting I forgot all about my charmer. The sea-breezes disintegrated my calf-love, and when I returned to London in October I was no longer disposed to murder her more serious admirers.

My theatrical acquaintances at Cambridge, moreover,

were not confined to one sex. There I got to know Harry Grattan, the comedian and producer, and it was George Rae, who played Tigellinus, who one memorable afternoon took me behind the scenes for the whole performance of ' The Sign of the Cross.'

In my first year at Cambridge the theatre had a rival house of entertainment. This was a very third-rate music-hall known as ' Arcadia ' situated half-way down Downing Street. It was supposed to be rather bad form for undergraduates to visit Arcadia—so of course I went. Only once, so far as I remember, did the programme in my time contain a star of any magnitude. This was Minnie Cunningham—immortalised by my old friend Walter Sickert—whose most popular song at the moment had a chorus something like this :

You can't judge cigars by the picture on the box,
Though you may be as clever as a cunning little fox.
For if you try to do it,
Most surely you will rue it,
You can't judge cigars by the picture on the box.

Minnie Cunningham was a delightful, simple, unaffected girl whom nobody could help liking. She travelled in state with ' Ma,' a pet dog and a cat. When she came to lunch, Ma and the animals came too, and somewhere I have a photograph of Minnie, Ma, me and the two pets grouped in a corner of the Old Court at Queens'. There we posed—right in front of the Senior Tutor's window, while Humphrys took our photograph.

Minnie certainly knew not only how to make friends but how to keep them, and for many years afterwards I used periodically to go and have tea with her and Ma at their home in Islington. She had the wonderful gift of never doing or saying the wrong thing and of being nice to everybody without making anybody ruffled or jealous. About the second day she was out with us she said, ' Look here, there are two other boys who want to know me. They've asked me to lunch with them to-morrow, but

I've told them I couldn't say yes or no till I had spoken to you about it first.'

That was like Minnie, she was always loyal to an old friend even if it were only a matter of days. Before we could say anything she continued, ' Well, when I told them that, they said wouldn't you both come to lunch too. Now do come, I shan't like to go if you won't.' So of course we did, and that is how I got to know Humphry of Jesus and Lightfoot of Pembroke.

Lightfoot afterwards became a great friend of mine. He was a fervent rationalist and the first time I had tea with him alone in his rooms he said to me with great gravity, ' I don't know what you are, but *I'm* not a Christian.'

I answered him with equal pride that I had myself long been an agnostic.

Up to my seventh birthday my faith was perfect and I was firmly convinced that I was attended by two guardian angels, of whom one, on my right, inspired all my good deeds, while the other, on my left, tempted me to evil actions. Soon after this, however, I was filled with philosophic doubt. One afternoon I repeated in the presence of a servant an expletive I had heard my father use in one of his rare moments of irritation.

' Oh you naughty boy,' said the girl, ' if you say that again God will strike you dead.'

Would he ? I wondered. I had an enquiring mind. It would be interesting to put it to the test. Not wishing to damage the house, I went out into the garden, there to continue my investigations. Choosing an open space, where the lightning would harm nothing but myself, I looked up at the sky and said ' Damn ' distinctly.

Nothing happened. Wishing to give God every opportunity to display his powers, I waited a few moments and again said ' Damn.' Again nothing happened. I would give him one more chance. For the third time, lifting my face to the sky, I said ' Damn.' Still nothing happened. Rather disappointed, I returned indoors,

and resolved to waste no more time on theological speculation.

That same year I had a wonderful holiday. For three months my sister and I with our nurse stayed with my Aunt Jones in Oxfordshire. She had taken a house at Kirtlington to be near her only son George, who was then an undergraduate at Oriel College. At that time my Cousin George was an enthusiastic geologist and during the Long Vacation he used to take me out with him to search for fossils in quarries. He gave me a hammer and a little chisel, taught me how to chip out fossils without breaking them, and after tea he would bring out an illustrated book and show me how to identify the fossils we had found. I was thrilled with this new pastime, and later, when he took me to the Museum at Oxford and we discovered I had got a fossil which they hadn't, I was swollen with the pride of the collector who has a unique specimen.

Delighted to see me taking the collecting of fossils so seriously, Cousin George gave me as a parting gift a copy of Page's *Geology*. Young as I was I read that book through and through and begged my father to get me other books on geology, which he did with much approval.

That summer spent with my Cousin George had, I am convinced, a profound influence on my life. Geology led to mineralogy; I formed a collection of minerals and haunted the Jermyn Street and South Kensington Museums. Mineralogy led to chemistry, and my mother's eldest brother, Dr. Thomas Lamb Phipson, being an analyst, encouraged me in this, gave me Bloxham's *Chemistry* and equipped me to conduct simple experiments. I was permitted to fit up a laboratory in one corner of the bathroom, and by the time I was twelve I had made considerable progress in qualitative analysis.

I must have been a queer child. Between eight and thirteen my three hobbies were geology, mineralogy and chemistry, and everything else was vastly inferior in interest.

But at thirteen I went to a public school and became more 'healthy and normal.' I developed two new hobbies—conjuring and the banjo. They were less instructive, but they made me more popular.

To return to Cambridge—after lunching with Lightfoot and his friend we naturally asked them back, and for the rest of Minnie Cunningham's stay she went about Cambridge with a bodyguard of four, and instead of rousing any ill-feelings among us, she left us all capital friends on her departure. I know very little of Minnie Cunningham's private life and origin, but I must say that in her gentleness, consideration for others, and inspired tactfulness she was an example to many women of a higher station. I cannot think there is anyone but is the better for having known her.

Minnie Cunningham was the first of the many theatrical people to whom Humphrys more or less introduced me. How he got to know her himself I forget, but he had a remarkable talent for getting to know anybody and getting possession of anything he wanted. He, though an amateur at the time, was my first journalist friend, and he ought to have been a great editor. I am sure that Fleet Street was the loser when he blossomed forth as a motor expert and Fire Extinguisher King.

Apart from some alleged humorous verse, the only things I ever wrote at Cambridge were some dramatic criticisms when I was understudying Humphrys. He was always engaged in undergraduate journalism and was connected with various rivals to *The Granta*. He got hold of very good 'copy' too, his special talent consisting in his gift for making celebrities confide in him. Interviews with Lord Milner and Ranjitsinghi were two of his *coups*. And it was Humphrys or one of his colleagues who had the superb assurance to write to Rudyard Kipling for a contribution while expressing a regret that the finances of the journal did not permit them to pay more than a guinea per thousand words.

With his customary good nature, Kipling sent a reply, and this was it :

> There once was an Author who wrote :
> Dear Sir—In reply to your note
> Of Yesterday's date
> I reluctantly state ;
> Can't be done at the prices you quote.

With the *flair* of a born journalist my friend at once had a block made of the sheet of notepaper containing this limerick and reproduced it in facsimile as a full page in his journal.

When I think of what some of my contemporaries were as undergraduates and what they are now, I am painfully conscious how beside the mark were nearly all our forecasts about their future. Most of the men who we expected to do brilliant things are still unknown : most of the men who have attained distinction were hardly remarked as undergraduates. Even C. F. G. Masterman, whom we all expected to see Prime Minister or next door to it, has not yet altogether fulfilled the high hopes we had of him when he was President of the Union. And what has become of T. F. R. Macdonnell of St. John's, the most eloquent orator and skilful debater at Cambridge at the end of the nineties ? And H. W. Brodie of Clare, the genius of the footlights, whom we were sure would be as great as Arthur Roberts or Seymour Hicks ? And my very dear friend Moyle Cooper, poet and composer, whom we were uncertain whether he would be Gilbert or Sullivan, but rather thought he might be both.

Cooper was one of the ' star ' contributors to *The Granta* in my day. He could write the wittiest lyrics and invent charming melodies to fit them. He could play his own things on the piano delightfully, and write them out too ; and while he was still at Cambridge he had written out half the score of a comic opera—an opera, alas ! never finished. We might have known Cooper, dear gentle creature, was not the sort to push himself forward in the

workaday world ; but in our youthful ignorance we thought that talent was enough.

To a superficial observer, I suppose, one May week must seem very like another, but I expect every graduate cherishes a memory of one particular May week which was better than all others. My bright particular one was in my third year when my mother and sister brought up with them Corinna Putnam, the beautiful daughter of our old friend George Haven Putnam.

Without knowing it in the least herself, Corinna broke hearts right and left, and even my mother was surprised at the vast number of my friends who clustered round her assiduously that fortnight.

With the boundless energy and zeal for sight-seeing which characterises her fellow-countrymen, Corinna wanted to do everything and see everything. And we did—very nearly. Together we went to Lincoln for the day and raced round the town : we saw the Cathedral, we saw the Castle, we saw all the Roman remains—and we ran all the way back to the station to catch our train. As I was still endeavouring to regain my breath in the compartment, the train pulled up at Peterborough. At once Corinna was on her feet. Hadn't we time to pop out and have just one peep ? To pass a Cathedral was more than a good American could endure. But I was firm. I refused to move. I said there was no train. I protested that we were expected back earlier. So leaving Peterborough unseen, we returned to Cambridge—not to rest, of course, but to go that same evening to the ball at Sidney Sussex and dance the programme through.

Wonderful Corinna ! she could dance till two o'clock in the morning and still come down to an early breakfast as fresh and bright as if she had had a full eight hours' sleep. Her father, of course, had many literary friends among the dons at Cambridge so that our social engagements that fortnight were not exclusively with undergraduates. An amusing incident happened one afternoon after we had been

having tea with Mr. Leonard Whibley—not Whibley of Jesus, author of *A Book of Scoundrels*, but Whibley of Pembroke, the classical scholar and historian.

With a perfectly grave face but a twinkle in his eye, Mr. Whibley said :—' We've got something in the Library that will interest you, Miss Putnam. I must take you upstairs to see it, it's an American flag of 1770.'

Corinna was thrilled at the prospect of seeing so precious a relic, so later on we were all marched into the Library and the flag was pointed out to us.

' Why,' says Corinna, very disappointed, ' that's a Union Jack.'

' Yes, Miss Putnam,' replied Whibley, ' but in 1770 that *was* the American flag.'

When she was in London in 1924 I reminded Corinna of the trick that had been played on her. *Eheu fugaces !* now she is Mrs. Joseph Lindley Smith, handsome as ever, but with two grown-up daughters.

# IV

## FIN-DE-SIÈCLE PARIS

Nobody who has paid his or her first visit to France since 1920 can have the faintest conception of what Paris was like in the nineties. The old life of the Latin Quarter has completely disappeared. The genuine French student is too poor now to show himself in the streets at night, and the Boulevard St. Michel—once his happy hunting-ground—is deserted at nightfall and its cafés are empty save for a few foreign residents and tourists. Last year the only genuine students I ever saw at night in that historic thoroughfare were Chinese.

It is the same, with a difference, in Montmartre. The old gaiety of youth, of boy students and their girls, has been replaced by a false gaiety of age. The dancing halls have multiplied exceedingly, but they have a strange and disparate population. Except in the cheap dancing places frequented by the lower middle classes, one never now sees young people dancing together. On either side of the river in the more expensive resorts I have noticed during the past few years that the young French girls are invariably partnered by elderly Americans or British manufacturers from the provinces, while the young Russians who swarm all over Paris are usually professionally engaged piloting round the room American women whose makeup cannot disguise their antiquity. No, Paris is not what it was : the follies of youth have been superseded by the insensate activity of the aged.

Man is a discontented animal. When I was a small boy having lessons at home, I longed to be at a big public school. When I was at school in London I wanted to be at Oxford or Cambridge—I didn't mind which so long as I got away from school. When I got to Cambridge I wanted to be at—no, not Oxford, I had learned better by then—Paris.

Before I left school I had seen something of the Continent. In 1892 my sister and I had been taken by our mother to Brussels, where she herself had spent most of her childhood, and we stayed nearly three months in Belgium. In 1894 I had visited Belgium again and also Holland, and the last year of his life my father had taken me a little tour in France and shown me the schools at Dieppe and Rouen where he had been educated before he went to London University and Heidelberg.

In 1897 my friend Ladbroke Black went to Passy for the Easter Vacation, partly to learn French himself and partly to teach Parisians that a *chic* unceremonious costume for a young Englishman abroad consisted of plus-fours, a college blazer and a bowler hat. Strollers in the *Bois* were immensely impressed, and many, I believe, took the crest on his blazer pocket to mark the high distinction of the wearer in his own country. Black persuaded me to join him in Paris, which I did, staying at a very horrible hotel near the Gare St. Lazare.

I was much more conventional in my ideas as to what an Englishman should wear in Paris. I had heard tales of Britons who disgraced their country by going to the opera in tweed suits. Black's costume scandalised me. It might have been all right for his native Yorkshire moors or the wilds of Ireland from which his ancestors sprung, but it simply would not do for the Boulevards.

It was I who, much against his will, compelled Black to put on evening dress when we paid our first visit to the Moulin Rouge, a well-meant but unfortunate compliment which made us both as conspicuous there as Black had been

in his normal attire at Passy. We spent a very fatiguing but rather dull evening endeavouring to escape young persons who, misled as to our finances by the elegance of our appearance, chased us all over the place. The most satisfactory part of the evening was that as we dodged about between people, brushing our way through groups to evade capture, we ultimately succeeded in getting out of the building without knocking up against a black boxer who, with his face shining as brightly as the huge diamond stud on his bosom, lounged impregnably about the bar surrounded by a coloured guard. If I had bumped into him I might not have been alive to write this chronicle.

Thus Black inocculated me and the virus of Paris took possession of my system. After that first visit I sought to return to Paris at any and every opportunity, and I generally managed to get there during two out of every three vacations.

If Black was responsible for my first step, another Cambridge friend, Moyle Cooper, lured me to return there again and again. Cooper really knew Paris, better still, he knew the Latin Quarter, which then, for me, *was* Paris. He knew Paris and he knew Parisians. He knew artists who painted pictures, sculptors who sculptured statues, poets, who read their poems aloud in cafés. He knew Frenchmen, he knew Americans, he knew Brazilians ; he knew everything and everybody. He was saluted with respect by the patron of the Café Procope, not the garish restaurant place of the present day, but the original tumble-down café where Voltaire had sat himself down to write, where Danton and Marat talked in dreadful whispers, where De Musset had lisped his honeyed numbers. In gilt letters on two panels were inscribed the names of the great men who had been habitués of the Café : it was thrilling to read them, and as we sipped our bock or coffee we seemed ourselves to be illumined with a ray from their reflected glory.

It was Cooper who showed me where to stay, who found my room for me in the Rue Jacob, that tiny but

beloved chamber to which I returned year after year till the house had a new proprietor who put in electric light, had the place re-papered and *cleaned*, and obviously set out to cater for Americans and raise his prices. It was no longer a house that a true Bohemian could tolerate.

Yes, Cooper showed me how it could be done, how easy it was, what a glorious, inspiring life one could live in the Quarter on about half-a-crown a day. It sounds like a fairy-tale now, but it is the solemn truth. Whenever I could muster up the money for the return fare and an additional five pounds, I was off to Paris for as long as my money lasted—and often I made it last a full four weeks.

'Impossible!' you cry. But consider, my room cost me twenty-five francs for the month, and a five franc tip for the valet-de-chambre. Always I took the room for the month, it was cheaper so even if you stayed only a little over a fortnight. Breakfast you went out for as a matter of course, and you could hardly spend more than twopence-halfpenny at the crémerie. Lunch, dinner—well, there were places where you could eat for one franc, one franc and a half, even two francs, if you must be gluttonous. But what was food to conversation? The great thing was, not to be piggish and squander the remainder of your day's allowance on a dinner, but to be sure to save enough to pay for one or two coffees in the evening. That really was important: one could easily go without dinner, but if one couldn't go to a café one might as well go back to England at once.

Tea? Well, either you got that at somebody's studio or you went without. Amusements? Why the café, your friends and the conversation, these were your amusements. Now and again when you felt really devilish you would spend a franc on the 'Bobbino' music-hall, or the Bal Bullier, or even tramp to Montmartre for an evening at the Moulin de la Galette. Bal Tabarin? Good Lord, no! that sort of thing was for the tourists. Places where they went were, as a rule, to be studiously avoided; but

we saw all sorts of things they never saw. We crossed the river for the Louvre, of course, and now and again to go to Montmartre. But in Heaven's name, what else was there to go across for? Nothing but *boutiques et bourgeois*.

There never was a place where you could have so good a time for so little money as Paris at the end of the nineties. In the Quarter nobody asked how much you had got or what your prospects were; the only question was what you were and what you had to say. Everybody was nice, everybody was kind, everybody believed in you. Race was nothing, nationality was nothing; talent was everything—and we all had talent. We believed in ourselves and we believed in our friends. We nodded our heads and saw nothing extravagant in an Englishman saying that in ten years he would be as great as Charles Dickens, a Frenchman that in ten years he would beat Victor Hugo. Youth! youth! youth!

Do they still hold the Murger fête in the Quarter? I was present at more than one anniversary in honour of the author of the *Vie de Bohéme* and was a recipient of the candle-end gravely presented to each guest in honour of the occasion. These were great festivals usually held at a café near the river end of the Boulevard St. Michel. There was very little liquor but gallons of oratory, and the poets read their poems, the musicians played their compositions, and the artists sketched their neighbours, and all solemnly drank to the memory of that good Bohemian.

Expenses were lessened from time to time by the kindly hospitality of our better-off friends, men who had regular jobs. Cooper introduced me to a charming man named Lane, who several times during various visits stood me a much better dinner than I could have paid for myself. He was a journalist on the staff and later Editor of *Galignani's Messenger*, and his conversation was even better than his dinners. He was a man with ideas, a man with ideals. I saw Lane for quite a number of years till 'Galignani' went smash. Then I lost sight of him altogether, for somehow

I never found out that he had gone over to the *Paris Daily Mail.*

Nearly twenty years later, while I was Curator of the Leeds Art Gallery, Sir Michael Sadler asked me to his house to meet Norman Angell. The moment we were introduced I thought I saw something familiar in his clean-shaven face. The black beard had gone, and some of the hair, but the eyes, surely they were the eyes of Lane? I spoke of Paris and recalled myself to his memory. He pretended to remember me—I can hardly hope that he did—but he certainly remembered Moyle Cooper and asked after him. The kindly host of my youth was the famous author of *The Great Illusion.*

Henry Mayer, the American caricaturist, was another man who was good to me in those days. He was a droll fellow who delighted in pretending to have a row with a friend on the pavement. He would throw his hat and his stick on the ground, assume a bellicose attitude as the crowd began to assemble, and then, talking fast a string of nonsense all the time, a heavenly smile as of entire comprehension would suddenly change and light up his face. Crying aloud ' Mon ami, mon ami ' he would embrace his friend amid the ' bravas ' and emotional rapture of the assembled populace. He took them in every time. Mayer would have made a wonderful cinema actor, for his elastic features would have wrought marvels in a ' close-up.'

Amusement? It was an entertainment to walk along a pavement with a man like Mayer, and there were a number of other wags then who frequented the American Art Students' club in the Impasse de Conti. Cooper and I had the run of the place, and usually made for it soon after our arrival to find out who was in Paris.

They were happy days, but all my early memories of Paris are not so joyous. One is terribly tragic. Only twice in my life did I see Oscar Wilde, and the contrast was awful. The first time was when I was a boy of ten or twelve. I was walking down Bond Street with my mother one sharp

spring morning when a gentleman coming the other way politely raised his hat as my mother bowed. It was the glossiest of silk hats, and below it was the face of a Greek god, a head of beautifully waved hair, and from his shoulders hung a magnificent overcoat with a rich fur collar. It was an apparition I have remembered all my life, for never since have I seen so handsome and striking a living man. 'Mother,' I whispered, almost awed, 'who was that?'—'That, my dear, is Mr. Oscar Wilde, the poet.'

One afternoon in 1898 I went into the Café Procope. I forget if Cooper was with me, but a man we knew named Sisley was there and I sat down beside him at his table. Presently he jerked his head towards a table on the other side and said, 'Do you know who that is?' I looked across and saw the round-shouldered back of a man sitting by himself. He was wearing a very shabby, badly stained, ill-fitting check tweed coat, and on his head was a battered, dirty-looking straw hat.

'No,' I said, not particularly interested.

'That,' said Sisley, 'is Oscar Wilde.'

I looked again, and as I looked the man half turned his head. The flesh of his cheeks hung down, he had the horrid deflated aspect of a fat man whose face has suddenly grown thin. It was a face utterly irreconcilable with my memory of what I had seen in Bond Street, and yet—God help us all—there was a kind of fantastic resemblance. It made me feel sick. I was filled with pity, but I couldn't stay in the place. 'I must go,' I said to Sisley, 'I've just remembered an appointment.' And I went.

Happily for me there was another sensation at Paris in 1898, a sensation big enough to make me forget for a time the tragedy of the author of *Ravenna*—the only Newdigate Prize Poem ever written by a real poet. It was the year of Rodin's *Balzac*.

Little did I dream when I was in Paris that Easter that I should ever become a professional art critic. But Cooper and I went as a matter of course to the Salon, and there,

dominating the arena in which the sculpture was shown, stood a rudely hewn, shapeless figure, surmounted by a leonine head tossed back and uplifted. This was Rodin's statue of Balzac and, so far as we had read or heard about it, we must have been biased against it, for few in those days had a word to say in its favour. Yet immediately we saw it the work held us, this statue alone drew us back to the Salon for a second and yet a third visit. It cost us three francs apiece, and that in itself was a tribute.

I have said that the trunk was shapeless. So it appeared to be at the first glance, because it lacked any obvious signs of arms and legs, the usual appendages to the human torso. Later it dawned on us that what was remarkable about the great novelist was, not his arms or his legs, but his head; and by loosely wrapping a dressing-gown, as a cloak, about his figure, the sculptor had deliberately shown an aspect of the man which compelled us to recognise his genius. There was nothing to distract from the head. So soon as our gaze lighted on the figure it inevitably flowed upwards to the head, a head proudly lifted to the stars, a countenance of Titanic cynicism and supreme self-confidence.

Here was a piece of sculpture very different from the wax-work ideals then in vogue at the Royal Academy in London; but it had two great qualities which a wax-work has never yet possessed. In the first place it was a living impression of a living man, for, despite its apparant shapelessness, one could, as one knew it better, trace the human figure concealed beneath the robe. Despite its immobility it contained a subtle suggestion of life and movement. Secondly, it enshrined an idea; and that idea was expressed with poignant simplicity and monumental grandeur.

Derided by the majority of the contemporary public and scornfully rejected by the Société des Gens de Lettres—by whom the work was originally commissioned—this pioneering masterpiece opened the way to two distinct movements in modern sculpture. At that time I was unacquainted with the work of the Italian sculptor, Medardo

Rosso, by whom I have now no doubt that Rodin himself was influenced, but Rosso's wonderful impressionist sculptures, his *Lady with a Veil* and *Baby in Sunlight*, have never yet succeeded in catching the eye of the big public. But the Balzac made a general sensation at once, and after being a topic of conversation in all circles it settled down to its real work of inspiring younger sculptors to creative effort.

It did this in two ways. It turned minds towards the possibilities of impressionism in sculpture, that is to say, to the modelling of form not merely as it is anatomically constructed, but as it appears through a veil of atmosphere under varying effects of light. Impressionist in this respect, the statue also contained the seed of post-impressionism in its simplification of form and in its monumental quality. Too original to be easily classified, the Balzac nevertheless is Gothic rather than Greek in type. Thus it heralded a later development of sculpture which, revolting from the naturalistic ideals of the cemetery, has endeavoured by a return to pre-Renaissance models, to re-invest sculpture with decorative and architectural significance.

Shortly after the exhibition of his Balzac, I made the acquaintance of the sculptor. Rodin himself, I remember, opened the door at which my introducer knocked in the Rue de l'Université. Protesting that he had very little to show there and that I must come and see his things at Meudon, Rodin asked us in all the same and showed me some busts on which he was working.

As he shuffled round the studio, in a heavy walk that fitted his dumpy figure, his fingers kept working almost unconsciously upon a little clay model which they had held when he first opened the door to us, and had retained ever since. It was a tiny hand, and he needed little encouragement to begin talking of the beauty of hands.

Taking me across the room to a cabinet, he pulled out drawer after drawer filled with small plaster hands, exquisitely modelled. ' You see,' he said, ' I have thoroughly

studied them.' Absorbed by his theme he spoke of his desire to model a hand on a colossal scale.

Some years later he carried out this project in the work known as *La Main de Dieu*. This was a great and triumphant experiment in modelling rather than an expression of any philosophic or religious theory, and to search for either of these in it is totally to misunderstand the man and his work. All Rodin's finest figures were plastically conceived; that is to say, they were inspired by his own vision of form rather than by any clearly held idea.

A few days after our call at the Rue de l'Université I visited Rodin at his home in Meudon. As he conducted me round the great glass-domed studio I could not help noting that the wooden pedestals supporting his heads and statuettes were covered with pencil jottings of titles. My curiosity was aroused, but at the time I did not like to say anything.

Subsequently, when I knew him better, I ventured to remark on them to the sculptor. Rodin explained quite simply that he had no head for titles and was usually indebted to his friends for the names by which his works were known. As an example, he gave me the history of his *John the Baptist*.

One morning things had gone very badly. He could not get his model to take up a satisfactory pose, and having wasted several hours he gave up in despair and told the model he could go. The man strode across the room to fetch his clothes—his movement was admirable. 'Stop!' cried the sculptor, 'stay as you are, and hold it.' Then he began feverishly to make a sketch. When the statue was finished Rodin had no idea but to exhibit it with the title 'A Man Walking,' but soon afterwards in came his friend Octave Mirbeau, the critic and novelist. 'Magnificent!' said Mirbeau. 'I read your purpose: it's John the Baptist of course.'

'It was an idea,' Rodin naïvely confessed to me, 'and I wrote it down at once *for fear that I might forget it*.'

Since that time, whenever literary friends came to his studio and explained to Rodin what his works really were and meant, the wise old artist preserved a discreet silence and, keeping a pencil stump handy, made a surreptitious note on the pedestal of any title likely to be useful. If I say that Rodin was not a thinker, I run the risk of being misunderstood. I do not mean that he *never* had an idea; obviously he had one when he planned his *Balzac*—though even this conception of his subject was first inspired by a glimpse of himself in his dressing-gown in a bath-room mirror—but I do mean that Rodin felt things rather than reasoned them out. His art was far more emotional than intellectual, and it was essentially concrete, not abstract. It was his emotion that made him great, and with it went that genuine affection for his material that marks a great craftsman.

I remember one day at Meudon he passed his hand over a newly arrived block of marble as if he wanted to caress it, and his eyes were shining as he murmured to me, 'La marbre, c'est si beau.' It was this love for the material that prompted him to let some of his heads emerge from an unsmoothed sea of marble which, unwrought, displayed the natural beauties of its crystalline structure. But much as he loved marble, Rodin was at his best in clay and bronze, because, fundamentally, he was not a carver but a modeller, perhaps the greatest modeller the world has ever seen. The busts and single figures of his prime are unsurpassed in mastery of modelling and beauty of expression; but when he attempted groups, which demand design as well as drawing, imagination in addition to craftsmanship, his success was never complete.

Each single figure of his *Citizens of Calais* is full of power and significance, but taken together their joint appeal is not aesthetic but psychological. Rodin was a master in rendering the thing seen, but he never proved himself to be a master in arrangement. He could fix a pose, arrest a movement, render an expression, as finely as any sculptor

who has ever lived ; but composition, the science of pattern-making with many figures, is an intellectual power that was never part of his equipment.

His *Gate of Hell* was never finished, and nobody who knew Rodin ever expected that it would be : it was a work for which Rodin was not temperamentally fitted. In his later years it was ludicrous and pitiful to see Rodin pointing to odds and ends of sculpture which he thought could be added to this work. He seemed to regard this *Gate* as a spacious bed in which he could safely plant any odd head, figure or group that was lying about handy. Never once did he appear to have any clear conception of the *Gate* as a whole with all its parts in ordered relation to each other. The attempt to make an imaginative artist of an uncompromising realist was bound to end in failure—and it did.

The friends of his later life who pushed Rodin towards intellectual conceptions he was not fitted to express did the artist a great ill-service. Worse still, the pressure of the fashionable world and the unintelligent flattery which rained on him from all Europe and America, made horrid inroads on his artistic honesty.

There is no great harm in a sculptor knocking one of his old clay figures about for experimental purposes, but when a fool arrives in the middle of the bashing and, gazing with awe on the wreck, reverently exclaims, ' Ne touchez pas, cher Maitre, c'est un chef d'œuvre ! ' why then even an old man who has grown a trifle indolent cannot be altogether forgiven for allowing the monstrosity to be sent to the foundry, cast, and subsequently exhibited as a ' new creation.' Poor Rodin ! His *Adam* was certainly born twice. The reason why several of the later works of Rodin are utterly indefensible is because they are only distorted and mangled dislocations of his earlier creations.

One of Rodin's assistants, whom I knew very well, used to join me at a café sometimes with tears in his eyes and rage in his heart because some flatterer had persuaded Rodin to have one of his ' knockabouts ' re-cast. Long and

heartily he would curse the society and literary friends who were sapping the virility of the master he revered. When I first knew Rodin he was a simple, kindly, honest worker, living for his art and his art alone. And he was roundly abused. During my last visits to his studio I found him a little vain, a little slack, a little snobbish. And then he was praised to the skies.

Now and again, even during the last ten years of his life, Rodin achieved a portrait head that recalled the splendour of his earlier work, but posterity, I am convinced, will see his greatness in the work of his youth and early maturity, in the fruitful period of production that lies between *The Man with the Broken Nose*, *The Age of Bronze* and the *Balzac*, and will pay scant attention to the vagaries of his later years.

The last time but one that I saw Rodin was after he had been elected President of the International Society, in succession to Whistler, and he had been brought to London to discharge the social duties of his position. As I watched him that evening receiving guests at the New Gallery, surrounded by his little band of courtiers, and distinguished by all the signs of what the world calls ' success '—his tired forced smile brought to my mind Henry James's story, *The Death of the Lion.* I could not help wondering whether Rodin had not been truly happier in his early days when he was unknown, unrecognised, struggling for his daily bread—yes, but producing masterpieces that will endure.

An amusing incident happened when I was returning from Paris in 1898. A little girl was behaving in a noisy and obstreperous fashion much to the distress of her parents and to the annoyance of other passengers in the compartment. At last the enraged father flung open the door leading to the corridor and exclaimed—' *Vois donc*, if you will not be a good girl I will put you in the compartment for " Ladies Only." ' This awful threat was immediately effective, and for the rest of the journey the child was as quiet as a mouse.

# V

## FIRST STEPS IN FLEET STREET

When I left Cambridge in June 1899 I had not the faintest idea what I was going to do. I knew I had got to earn my own living. But how? My resources were pitifully small. I had scraped through my examinations and taken a degree in a subject (Semitic Languages) which really interested me very little and led to hardly anything but schoolmastering and the Church, for neither of which I was inclined. My father, who died in 1896, had wanted me to become an archaeologist; he had entertained a vague hope that I might get 'something' at the British Museum or go excavating in the East, a pursuit he himself would have loved much better than the Law to which he had been chained by his father: but I had other ideas, for I was then much more interested in the moderns than the ancients.

My mother long cherished a delusion that I might yet receive a 'call' to Holy Orders, but the dear woman gave me absolute liberty and never sought to influence my decisions in any way. As a matter of duty I made enquiries at the British Museum and soon discovered there was no vacancy and that if there had been one I was not likely to get it. Having a titular knowledge of classical Arabic—on the strength of my degree—I thought of Egypt, but found that satisfactory appointments there were not to be obtained in London but on the spot, and I had no inclination to go out to Egypt 'on spec.' Meanwhile I had got to find something, and find it quick.

I had extraordinary good luck. Less than two weeks after coming down from Cambridge I saw an advertisement in the *Times* for a travelling tutor. I answered it, and two days later got a letter asking me to call at the office of a shipping magnate. I got the appointment—four guineas a week and all expenses—by the mere chance of a double coincidence.

Mr. B. explained to me that his son was already in Switzerland with a tutor, but that the tutor was ill and could no longer look after him. That tutor, whom he liked very much, had been an old Merchant Taylor and at Queens' College, Cambridge. In reply to his advertisement he had had more than eighty replies, but I was the only applicant who had been educated both at Merchant Taylors' School and at Queens', Cambridge: therefore he had decided to see me first.

We had some conversation and he thought I would do. When could I go? The day was Monday. I thought a minute, and then—'Wednesday,' I said. 'Good,' replied Mr. B., 'that's settled. I'll wire out at once. Meanwhile I'll give you a cheque to go on with. You can get it cashed to-day and get your ticket. You will pay all expenses for my son and yourself and send me an account monthly. When you want more money you must let me know. Don't allow yourself to run short. Write me a line to say how things are after you've arrived. Have a good time, but make the boy work. I think that's all. Good morning.'

So early in July I arrived one evening at Clarens, where I was met by the pupil I was to prepare for Oxford. 'Bertie' was a delightful boy of seventeen, rather delicate, but full of high spirits. By the time we got to the hotel nearly everybody had gone to bed, but Bertie said he would forage and get me a drink. He returned shortly with two glasses and some claret, and it was not till days afterwards that I discovered we had had our drinks out of somebody else's bottle—a somebody my pupil did not like very much.

That was the sort of lad he was—he had a practical sense of humour which displayed itself in chalking wrong numbers on the boots outside bedroom doors and altering numbers on the labels of wine-bottles. Then he would lounge around with a happy smile listening to the violent altercations which ensued!

Apart from one or two awkward moments when I had to explain things to infuriated visitors who had no sense of humour, we had a delightful time and we were certainly never dull. Towards the middle of the month, when it got too hot for comfort at Clarens, we moved with Mr. B.'s approval to Fins Hauts, where I had one of the happiest eight weeks I have ever spent. It was quite a small village then, just half-a-dozen hotels, a general store and a bootshop, nothing more. The hotels were full, but not overcrowded, and the life was extremely pleasant. We were a cosmopolitan crowd, but all very friendly and sociable. We mixed with Swedes, Russians, French people, Americans and Austrians, but—it is strange to remember now—no Germans. The Germans were all at one hotel and kept to themselves, I remember.

We stayed at the Bel Oiseau, but whenever there was anything on at another hotel—and there seemed to be a dance or a concert somewhere every evening—Bertie and I were always invited. I remember a young Russian and his sister who were splendid dancers and always led the cotillion—wherever it was—and how as a grand finale we used to join hands and go dancing all through the village street in the early hours of the morning. There was a South American with two daughters, one of whom was considered a beauty, while the other—whom I liked much better—used always to volunteer to play the piano and let the others have an informal dance.

There was a French lady, also with two daughters, but these were rather cold-shouldered by the English people just because they were nieces of the notorious General Mercier. I nearly got myself disliked because I would

talk to them and accompanied them on one or two excursions. They were quite nice girls who could not be blamed because they supported the political opinions of an uncle they very properly admired. But in 1899 the Dreyfus case was a very delicate subject about which it was difficult to get anybody to talk reasonably and humanly. Of course I was convinced of the innocence of Dreyfus, as most Englishmen were, but I was careful to avoid this burning question when I was with the Mercier family.

Our routine at Fins Hauts was simple and regular. Bertie was good at getting up in the morning, and preferred to do the work I set him overnight before breakfast. This suited me admirably, and he would put in something approaching to two hours work before we had breakfast together, usually on the verandah, at 8.30. After breakfast I corrected his papers and we worked together till *déjeuner*. After that we were both free for the day, and often we tore off immediately after lunch to catch up a picnic party that had set off to climb some minor height during the morning.

Our time for starting on these expeditions was a perpetual source of astonishment to the natives, who would congregate on the shady side of the street to watch the two ' mad Englishmen ' going off for a climb in the blazing heat of the middle of the day. But I never discovered that he or I were any the worse for our temerity, and nearly always we caught up our party, resting on some summit, and after a long rest returned with them in the cool of the afternoon. Once we missed them, and that day we had a very bad quarter of an hour through taking a short cut which landed us in an awkward *couloir*. For a time we seemed to be absolutely stuck in a rocky cleft from which we could neither get up nor get down, but at last we found a way up and over. Bertie was a real brick in the moment of danger, and I have never forgotten how calm and collected he was nor his implicit confidence that I should find a way out. I was much more scared than he was, and I'll wager he set a good example to the company he led in the Great War.

But these strenuous feats were not daily events. More often we joined an afternoon party and had an *al fresco* tea in one of the many beauty spots which abound in this most beautiful Swiss valley. We would sit in some spot facing the whole of the Mont Blanc range or the glacier de Trient, and there we would sip our tea, smoke cigarettes and discuss all sorts of interesting things with our companions. Among the most faithful of these were a charming Swede, with whom I kept up a friendship for many years, a pretty unattached French girl whom I was sorry to lose sight of afterwards, and an English lady and her daughter—a schoolgirl from Lausanne—with whom Bertie fell deeply in love.

When Mr. B. joined us for a week at Fins Hauts during the summer he was rather alarmed at this attachment and discussed it with me very seriously. I put on my best man-of-the-world manner and talked as if I were years older than my charge, who, after all, was only about five years my junior. 'I think it would be a mistake to take too much notice of it,' I remember saying ; 'my experience is that opposition only encourages this sort of thing and makes the people concerned take it more seriously. Leave it to me, Mr. B., I've got my eyes open, but I'm sure it'll come to nothing.' So he left it to me—and it did.

For some reason I was never able to find out, the young romantics had a tiff as we were coming back from the Grand St. Bernard—where we had spent the night with a party from Fins Hauts who made the same excursion. They made it up afterwards, but the affection gradually petered out through various stages of diminishing friendship.

Towards the end of September we moved to Chamonix where we spent a week, but we did no serious climbing there, because Bertie suffered from asthma and always had breathing trouble when he approached an 8,000 feet altitude. From Chamonix we went to Geneva and passed a week there, whence we arrived at Paris early in October.

In Paris we looked up one or two of the people we had got to know at Fins Hauts, and I introduced Bertie to some of my artist friends in the Latin Quarter. Stephen Haweis, whom I had known at Cambridge, had a studio in the favourite Rue Campagne Première, Montparnasse, and Bertie was immensely pleased to meet him. Haweis was the son of the well-known clergyman, the author of *Music and Morals*, and in his youth he had some of the eccentricity which marked his father. The Rev. Mr. Haweis once ascended the pulpit of St. James's, Marylebone, with his violin in his hand, played a solo with the virtuosity of a professional and the feeling of a real musician, and then told his congregation—with truth—that that would do them as much good as a sermon—' And now . . . '

Stephen was nearly as good. At Peterhouse he kept a pet snake, to the terror of his bedmaker, and conspired against the peace of mind of my American girl friend—up for the May week—by running up a Spanish flag over the chapel of his college. This, of course, was during the Hispano-American war.

At Paris in 1899 Haweis lived up to the part of a real true artist by wearing a black embroidered shirt, an amber necklace and sandals. Being a very diminutive little fellow—he was known at Cambridge as ' The Beetle '—he could carry off his strange attire better than most men, but he always attracted attention when he came over the other side to see us at the Hotel de Louvre. Bertie didn't mind going about Paris with him in the least, but since the weather was not what it might have been, and Haweis, for all his strangeness, was very particular about his person, we both found it rather a nuisance that our promenades abroad were constantly interrupted by Haweis wanting to go off somewhere to ' wash his feet.' That is the worst of sandals.

But the abiding memory of that stay in Paris is Fort Chabrol. We were lucky enough to invent an excuse to take us into the Rue Chabrol—barricaded at either end—and so see the close-shuttered house where the notorious

Guerin for days on end defied the French Government and stood a regular siege. Never in my life have I seen anything funnier than the half-circle of soldiers patiently standing to attention round the house while a camp stool on the pavement afforded a base for their officer. We saw Guerin himself, who came out on the roof smoking a big cigar. 'Vive l'armée,' he cried out, and then showed his respect for it by flicking his cigar ash over the parapet on to the half-company below. What a scene! In London it would not have been tolerated for half-a-day, let alone a week, and what was wanted, as Bertie said, was a stolid London policeman to break the door down and haul off the offender as a matter of routine in the daily work of the Force.

Poor Bertie! he failed in Responsions that autumn—which did not altogether surprise me—but subsequently passed after he had spent a couple of terms with a London crammer. The last time I saw him was at the Café Royal in 1917; he was in khaki and we spent a jolly evening talking over old times. A few days later he left for the Western Front—and never returned.

By the end of October, 1899, I was back in London again, my temporary occupation gone and my future as much a problem as ever. Still, I was not in a bad position: I had a home to go to and I had something over eighty pounds in the bank. For the moment I was all right, so why worry?

Only one other experience of tutoring have I had, and that was as detestable as the other had been enjoyable. Fortunately it did not last long. My job was to look after two small boys during the Christmas vacation, and though I suppose they were no worse than other small boys of their age, I was heartily glad when the time came for them to go back to school. The experience was enough to convince me that I had no aptitude for the training of youth.

For long I had had a dim idea that I should rather like to write. I had begun a novel—terrible clap-trap—when

I was eighteen, and I had had two or three things printed in undergraduate journals while I was at Cambridge. But I had never thought seriously of journalism, though it had been suggested to me by one who, perhaps, knew me better than I knew myself.

A few days after I had struggled through the last of the papers for my Tripos, my tutor, the Rev. R. H. Kennett—who was always a real good friend to me—sent for me to come and see him after Hall. 'Well, Rutter,' he said, 'you'll get your degree. You won't get honours and you don't deserve them. You know you could have done very much better if you had worked. In fact, you are very lucky to get the degree; there was some doubt about it, and it may interest you to know that it was your essay that decided the point in your favour. It was clever, shallow, of course, but ingenious. You certainly have a remarkable faculty for making bricks without straw. Have you ever thought about journalism?'

I wish I could remember the three questions in the essay paper, one of which had to be chosen. Two I have forgotten completely, but I'm sure I knew nothing about them. The third, which I attempted to answer, was—'Compare Hebrew and Syriac Poetry.'

Well, I knew something about Hebrew poetry—I had done the Psalms and the Book of Job in the original at school: but all I knew of Syriac poetry was that the only poems in that language which had survived were hymns. On this scanty foundation I reared the edifice of my essay. My argument was that, supposing by some unimaginable disaster all Shakespeare, all Milton, all Shelley, in fact all English poems had perished except 'Hymns, Ancient and Modern,' could anybody form a just opinion from that one book what was the nature of English poetry? Then was it fair to judge the Syrians by a handful of hymns? They *might* have had true poets whose works have entirely perished. The Hebrews were more fortunate, the Psalms, Job, Song of Songs, and so on and so forth. Lyric poetry, epic

poetry, dramatic poetry—all were there; but of Syriac verse there was not enough material for any serious comparison to be made. Q.E.D.

Sheer bluff, of course, but it did the trick.

Curiously enough, I don't believe I ever remembered Dr. Kennett's prophetic question till many years afterwards. I certainly did not think of it in the winter of 1899-1900, when I was wondering what I should do to earn my living. Yet all the time subtle and unperceived threads were drawing me towards Fleet Street. My intimate friend, Ladbroke Black—who had entered Queens' the same term as myself and for three years had been my close companion in London and Paris as well as Cambridge—was already there. He was on the staff of *The Morning Herald*—nothing to do with the present *Daily Herald*—a now defunct half-penny daily with Liberal principles. Often I would go down to Fleet Street of an evening and have supper with Black at the Press Café, and it was chiefly owing to his example and precept that I eventually bought a typewriter and began sending things to the papers.

My first machine cost me five pounds, and I am sure never before or since have I spent money more wisely. I had it for four years and then sold it for two pounds and bought another of the same make—a 'Blick'—and I am using one of these machines now. I never could bother to learn another.

For a writer it may seem a strange confession, but I have never been able to get on with a pen. Fountain-pens I abominate, for I always either break them or do something to make the ink flow in the wrong place and the wrong direction. And I hate getting my hands in a mess. So for more than twenty years I have done practically all my work either direct on the machine or with a pencil. I can manage a pencil all right, but a pen—well, it seems to cramp both my thought and action.

Like all beginners I wasted a number of good postage stamps and amassed an assortment of 'Declined with

thanks ' slips. The first thing I had published—and paid for—was a letter to *The Spectator* on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. It was sent as an article and used as correspondence. I have never contributed to *The Spectator* since.

My second success was an anecdote accepted by *The Golden Penny*, a popular weekly, now defunct, then belonging to the proprietors of the *Daily Graphic*. I forget what the third was, but soon after this, on Black's advice, I devoted myself to ' news ' : I kept my ears open and was pleasantly surprised to find how ready the news-editors of the big dailies were to accept any news item of real interest even when it came from a totally unknown outsider.

One evening I was at a theatre with my second brother, who had just returned from India, and by a happy coincidence the two stalls next to us were occupied by two girls I had known at Cambridge. One of them was full of trouble because her flat had been burgled that morning and she had lost some valuable jewellery. My brother took us all to supper and, when I rather boasted that I was ' connected with the Press,' Florrie poured forth information and gave me an exhaustive description of the stolen jewels. Early next morning I had typed out eight different accounts of the robbery, placed my ' copy ' in eight different envelopes which by ten o'clock or soon after I had delivered by hand at the respective offices of *The Globe*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Westminster Gazette*, *Evening Standard*, *Evening News*, *Star*, *Sun* and *Echo*. Ah, me ! evening papers were evening papers in those days and Londoners were not compelled to make a choice between a paltry three.

News must have been scarce that day, for during the afternoon I had the immense satisfaction of seeing the streets of London simply alive with newsboys bearing posters which read :

DARING
WEST END
JEWEL
ROBBERY.

I did very well out of that. It was my first real ' scoop,' and I grieve to think that the youngsters of to-day have so few dailies from which cheques can be coaxed, for in addition to the eight ' evenings,' there was a round dozen of ' mornings.' The *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Sketch* were non-existent then—the *Daily Graphic* was the only daily picture-paper—but from a journalist's standpoint I am not sure that these two newcomers make up for the loss of *The Standard*, *The Morning Leader* and *The Morning Herald*. The last was very good to me, or rather its editor, Thomas Cox Meech was. He not only took things I sent him, but now and again suggested to me things he would like to have.

Then, as now, there was a Housing Problem, and as it was to the front in the spring of 1900, Meech suggested I should find somebody to interview on the subject.

Now I had met George Bernard Shaw. He and my eldest brother had been together on the old St. Pancras Vestry, and one afternoon when I went there to meet Thornton he had introduced me to Shaw.

Shaw was not then the world-famous dramatist he is now, but even then he was a ' big noise,' as the Americans say, and I knew he would be a fine man to interview on the subject. On the strength of this one meeting and the casual introduction I wrote to Shaw, telling him what I wanted and asking if he would consent. Two days later I received a long envelope enclosing a type-written ' interview ' on the Housing Problem, far wittier and more intelligent than I could possibly have manufactured even with his verbal aid, and—best of all—a note inside saying, ' Make what use you like of the enclosed and come to tea at 4 p.m. on Thursday when we can talk of other things.'

Could anything be kinder or more generous? Not only to make a youngster a present of a column of valuable copy, but—lest he might feel that he was being got rid of—to follow it up with a friendly invitation. But that

is the real Shaw, the kindest-hearted man in the world, as well as the wittiest. Those who know his books know something good: those who know the man know something even better.

Of course I went to tea, and so began an acquaintance which I am proud to claim to-day. What we talked about —or rather what Shaw talked about—I forget, but I know he kept me chuckling for more than an hour and I can still see the light dancing in his eyes and the demure smile which never left his lips for long.

Two fragments of his conversation I have never forgotten. To me as a novice in the writing trade he had been giving some sound advice, and I remember he wound up with, 'Get talked about, that's the great thing. It doesn't matter what people say so long as they say something.' Profoundly true! The other fragment that survives consists of his parting words when at last I rose to go— 'If you want to see me, join the Fabian Society. You'll always find me there.'

Here and now I brazenly avow that I *did* join the Fabian Society, and I joined it chiefly for the opportunity it gave me to meet and converse with George Bernard Shaw and other Fabians, like Aylmer Maude and Clutton Brock, to know whom was a delight and an education. Shaw on the platform is always good, but Shaw in the audience when somebody else is on the platform is even better. Never have I heard his equal in debate, never have I known any other man who so acutely could sum up in three or four sentences the kernel of what another speaker had taken an hour to expound, and then, in another couple of sentences, tear all his arguments to tatters.

A few years ago Roger Fry went to a Fabian Summer School to lecture on 'The Modern Movement in Art and its Relation to Life.' Shaw was there and so was I. The lecturer, I confess, did not make clear to me his idea of the relation of the modern art movement to life, but I think he made clear to everybody his idea that the works

of art he admired were done for the sake of art. Then G. B. S. got up and quite amiably informed the lecturer that the artistic problems and achievements in which he was interested were matters about which the public 'does not care a twopenny damn, and never will. All great artists are propagandists,' Shaw stoutly continued, and he finished up by saying, 'What Mr. Fry calls Art, I call Confectionery.'

Having thus disposed of Roger Fry, Bernard Shaw—in baggy plus-fours—proceeded to release some more of his inexhaustible energy by joining in the country dances which were going on in another room that evening. And there, 'treading the light fantastic,' we will leave him for a moment, the youngest in heart and spirit of all the young Fabians who dance around him.

Where was I? Ah yes, I had just published my first interview, which, as the reader will perceive, was no interview of mine at all. My second was a *pucka*, bona-fide affair, and it was the most wonderful 'scoop' I have ever had in my life.

Among my mother's friends and near neighbours in Warrington Crescent was one of the dearest and most talented old ladies I have ever met, Mrs. Hector, better known as 'Mrs. Alexander,' the authoress of numerous 'three-decker' novels of the old school, among which *The Wooing O't* had the widest popularity. Mrs. Alexander, as I will call her here, gave me the greatest encouragement and inspiration. I would go to her in my bad moments—and for weeks sometimes I would get nothing accepted—and she always made me feel more confident and hopeful. Yet she was by no means a lenient critic: she was too sincere to utter a falsehood just to be polite and give a passing pleasure. Her extreme good-nature and her standing as a Victorian novelist exposed her to incessant petitions to read manuscripts and 'just say what you really think.' One persistent young lady, whose conversation gave little promise of literary ability, insisted on leaving a

packet with her, and it so happened that I chanced to overhear the sequel.

Late one afternoon I was standing with the youngest daughter just inside an adjoining room, screened by a curtain, when the young lady came bustling into the room where the authoress was sitting.

'Well, Mrs. Alexander,' she said breathlessly, 'have you read my novel? What do you think of it?'

'Yes, my dear,' said Mrs. Alexander gently, 'I've read it.' A pause, and then, 'Tell me, have you written any other novels?'

'Well no, Mrs. Alexander, I've not actually written any others, but I've several irons in the fire.'

'Hum,' said Mrs. Alexander, picking up the packet and passing it over, 'Please don't think me unkind, but you'd much better put this with the other irons.'

In the spring of 1900 Mrs. Alexander beckoned to me one afternoon and whispered that she had something very special to say to me when the other visitors had gone. Before going any further I ought to explain that her eldest daughter was then secretary to Rider Haggard.

'Listen,' said Mrs. Alexander when we were alone. 'My daughter tells me that Major Burnham is soon coming back from South Africa. Nobody knows about it, nobody will know. He's going to stay with Mr. Rider Haggard, and I'm arranging that you shall go and interview him the moment he comes to London. Don't say anything to anybody. I'll tell you when and where to go, and then you must go at once to be first in the field.'

So shamefully short are our memories, so largely has the European war of 1914-1918 sponged out memories of the earlier South African campaign, that I tremble lest there be men of my own generation who have forgotten the heroic name of Major Burnham, the American Scout.

In 1900 everybody knew the exploits of Burnham, the Matabele wars were fresh in our memory, and 'Wilson's Last Stand' was treasured as a British equivalent to Leonidas

at Thermopylae. That glorious epic, which Andrew Lang told so well in his *Red True Story Book*, I have heard from the lips of Burnham himself—Burnham who was one of the two men sent back by Wilson to the main body—itself hard pressed by the enemy—Burnham, who with his companion made his way through incredible dangers and difficulties, who was one of the only two survivors of Wilson's band of heroes.

Need I say that I was thrilled by the opportunity Mrs. Alexander was giving me? Burnham was a hero of legend, he had been mentioned in despatches, he had been awarded the D.S.O., he was coming home wounded. The tales told of him were incredible. He did things on his own. He was an army in himself. He was the man who flung a sack of cordite over his shoulder, mounted his pony, dodged half-a-dozen Boer commandos, and blew up a vital railway bridge under the nose of Botha himself. And this Kentucky gentleman, who for sheer love of the game, because he was loyal to his ' pals,' because he thought our cause was just, was pouring out his blood for England, I was to see him, I was to be his mouthpiece for the British public!

The day came when I received the message and I went. Major Burnham received me very kindly, but at first wanted to talk about anything or anybody except himself. I found him to be a shortish, thick-set man with piercing but kindly light-blue eyes, rather like Claude Monet to look at in some respects, only Monet was heavier. Burnham was lighter, more elastic in his movements and gestures.

At last he got well going on South Africa, and for about an hour and a half he talked. He told me all sorts of things—things I was not to publish (and did not), things that I might. I drank it all in, keeping my eyes on him the whole while, and never taking a single note. I relied entirely on my memory. Then I went home, shut myself up in my study with my typewriter, was well supplied with relays of strong tea by my mother and sister, and by ten

o'clock that night I had boiled down that wonderful afternoon's talk into an article of about 1,500 words. I posted a carbon copy of it to Burnham, as I had promised him I would do. Then I went to bed, for there was nothing I could do till I had his reply. That came the following afternoon—it was O.K., not a single alteration.

I had the finest story of the Boer War and I was going to take it to the best market. This was not a thing to split up between eight newspapers like a jewel robbery—it was in quite another plane of journalism. It was an 'exclusive' and there was only one right place for it. I went straight down to Printing House Square and saw the News Editor of *The Times*. I had never been to the office before. I told him who I was, explained exactly how and through whom I had obtained the interview—carefully withholding Burnham's address all the same—and finally presented my article. He read it through, jumped at it, and the next morning it was printed verbatim in *The Times*.

Of course Burnham had told me far more than I could compress into one column of *The Times*, and I 'wrote him up,' as the horrid phrase goes, in several other papers, winding up with the story of his life for the illustrated boys' paper *The Captain*. I managed to do all this without offending Burnham in the least, and later on he showed his natural kindness and his approval of me by giving me another valuable 'tip' and introduction.

Here let me interpolate, for the benefit of my younger *confrères*, that I am quite certain that I was happy in winning Major Burnham's esteem, not because I had any 'charm of manner,' but because he discovered I could be trusted. The most valuable asset any journalist can possess is a capacity to win confidence in his integrity, and this is won by one thing only, the capacity to keep his mouth shut.

It may seem very clever to worm something out of a person that he or she does not want to be published, and then print it; but it is a cleverness that in time cuts its own

throat. A journalist who cannot discriminate between what is told for his private ear and what is told him for publication, is never likely to rise high or stay high in his profession. To print what you have been asked not to publish may bring immediate profit, may even lead to temporary promotion, but make a habit of it and you are damned—and rightly so.

To continue: some weeks after our first interview Burnham said to me, ' See here, Rutter, my friend Colonel Harry White is coming home on leave. He's been with Plumer from the start, and there have been no war-correspondents with the Northern Column. You ought to be able to get a good story out of him. I'll give you an introduction and tell him not to talk to any other journalist till he has seen you.'

Now Harry White was a name to conjure with: he had been one of the ' Jameson Raiders,' he was Plumer's Chief of Staff throughout the Boer War. I looked forward to a second ' scoop.'

In the course of the summer Colonel White arrived and Burnham was as good as his word. I went and saw Colonel White to whom I took an instant liking, and nobody could have been kinder to me than he was. He told me the whole story of the Northern Campaign from the week before the Boer ultimatum was launched—when Plumer had sent three squadrons from Tuli to guard the Border stations at Crocodile River—right down to the relief of Mafeking.

Thanks to the manner in which Plumer and his men had guarded the line during nine weary months and had kept Rhodesia free from invasion despite continual attacks by vastly superior Boer forces, *three days* after the nominal relief of Mafeking Plumer was able to run a train with supplies and provisions into that hungry town. And never let it be forgotten that Plumer's train, not Mahon's cavalry, was the true relief at Mafeking.

Well, Colonel White told me all this and more, he gave me facsimile copies of the only maps of the district which

the staff possessed, and he was kind enough to look through and correct the typewritten article I based on what he told me. Here comes the curious sequel. I blithely took that article down to Printing House Square, confident that I should have a second triumph. Not a bit of it.

*The Times* wouldn't look at it. I was told that it was too 'stale' as news, that the public wasn't interested in Plumer and his column. Now, if I could bring them something about Baden-Powell—that would be another matter. I tried all the other big dailies: none would touch it. I tried the weeklies, then the monthlies beginning with *Blackwood's*. I hawked that article all over London, and everywhere I was met with the same story. 'The public isn't interested in Plumer: you bring us something about Baden-Powell.'

The Chief Scout must forgive me if I say plainly that the editors of London made his name stink in my nostrils. I am not blaming him, a gallant officer and worthy gentleman, but even now when I think of all the publicity given to Baden-Powell and denied to Plumer my very soul turns sick within me. For twenty-five years I have had Colonel Harry White's narrative in my manuscript drawer. From time to time I have typed it out afresh and tried it on some editor with whom I have been personally acquainted. Of recent years they have not asked me for something about B. P., they have merely protested mildly 'My dear old chap —very interesting and very hard lines of course—but *we* can't go in for Ancient History.' And so, never till this day has White's story of the campaign 'From Tuli to Mafeking' appeared in print. Now at last I have an opportunity to make amends, and so I tack the oft rejected manuscript to the end of this volume.[1]

Strange are the ways of journalism! From what I have said above the reader will perceive—especially after he has read the Appendix—how absolutely first rate 'copy' may happen to go a-begging.

[1] See Appendix, *The Mafeking Campaign*.

Now let him read on and learn how preposterous piffle may pave the way to prosperity.

The year of the relief of Mafeking (1900) was also the year of the Boxer Rising in China. Fleet Street, and London generally, went into screams of delight over the long detailed and circumstantial accounts published by two popular London dailies of a massacre which never took place in Pekin. I also, though dealing chiefly in news, had not lost my interest in fiction. From time to time I tried my hand at a short story or magazine article, which usually came back to me more or less promptly.

During the weeks when I was unsuccessfully endeavouring to get Colonel White's narrative published, I wrote an entirely imaginary and fictitious 'interview' with the Emperor of China, an essay in alleged humour. I sent it to the magazine-journal *To-Day*, for which I had always had a special affection ever since it had been started by Jerome K. Jerome. Indeed, I won a prize in one of its early competitions and had read it regularly while I was at Cambridge. And with contributors like Robert Louis Stevenson, Kipling, George Gissing, Eden Phillpotts, Barry Pain, Zangwill, etc., it was easily the best literary weekly of its time.

Well, my Emperor of China article was perfectly silly, but it had one supreme merit: it just filled one column of *To-Day*. Almost by return of post I got a letter from the then editor, George Wedlake, accepting it and asking for more. I sent him an even sillier imaginary interview with President Kruger—the same length. Wedlake wrote again and asked me to call at the office. He liked my 'Impossible Interviews'—and he wanted a new one-column feature. Could I keep it up? I said I could. Very well then, he would take one every week and give me a guinea for it. I called again, and he suggested articles I could write for other papers with which he was connected, *Madame* and *The Sunday Special*. In October I got a letter from him saying he had an immediate vacancy, and would I

become his assistant-editor at a salary of five guineas a week ? You bet !

History and heroism had got me nowhere. Utter rot, flippantly expressed, got me my first regular job. Well, well, we live and learn.

## VI

## 'TO-DAY' AND 'THE DAILY MAIL'

To speak no evil of the dead is doubtless an excellent and most Christian maxim, but it is a counsel of perfection which no veracious chronicler can hope implicitly to follow. George Wedlake, I have every reason to believe, was a good husband and a good father; but he was a bad editor, and as a financial adviser he was, to put it mildly, disastrous to all who placed their faith in him.

Wedlake was a bad editor firstly because, instead of running *To-Day* on the lines laid down by its founder, Jerome K. Jerome, he tried to make it something else. The great idea of Jerome had been to issue a paper that was half a magazine and half a journal. The magazine half was supported by the very best writers he could get, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, George Gissing, W. W. Jacobs, Bret Harte, Barry Pain, Zangwill and Clark Russell—these were a few of the contributors during the magazine-journal's first year of existence. The journal half consisted of comment and gossip on topics of the day, comment that was studiously non-party as regards politics but informed by a fervent and all-embracing humanitarianism. The magazine half speedily won for the new paper a great literary reputation; the journal section offended nobody and breathed a benevolent air of Dickensian good-fellowship.

Wedlake altered all this. He let down the magazine side badly, because he had no critical sense in literature.

He judged authors by their reputations more than by their work, and when he had secured two or three ' good names ' he thought he had done enough. He was not successful as Jerome had been in discovering and bringing to light new novelists of talent. Wedlake's sense of humour was coarse, and though he wisely retained the services of W. L. Alden and Barry Pain—whose ' De Omnibus ' was one of the most popular features—under his editorship *To-Day* tended to lose its light touch.

Wedlake was a heavy man himself, and his heaviness descended like a lump of lead on the journal half. This he made unnecessarily serious and portentously solemn ; he was decidedly a partisan in politics, he was not humanitarian, and after the Boer War broke out he offended thousands of readers by adopting what was held to be a Pro-Boer attitude and by tilting week after week at the reputations of the generals in the field. I was not enthusiastic about the Boer War myself—I was neither a Chamberlainite nor a Milnerite—but I did object to the perpetual slanging of Buller, Methuen, and the rest. It was in the worst possible taste, it was tactless, and—fatal error—it was not what the great British Public expected to read in *To-Day*.

Secondly, Wedlake was a bad editor because, while he pared down his contributors' account, he allowed his cost of production to be far in excess of what it should have been. He paid too much for paper, too much for printing, and too much for the engraving of process blocks.

Personally I got on very well with Wedlake, and I should be ungrateful indeed if I failed to acknowledge that he believed in me and gave me my chance. He thought I was a promising humorist ! The routine work presented little difficulty to me, for I was already tolerably familiar with the inside of a newspaper office, and I soon learnt how to mark up drawings and photographs for the engraver, to measure up proofs and make up the paper. We never had a row or ' words ' the six months I was under him,

though I know he had minor grievances against me One was my habit of saying 'Sir,' which got on his nerves.

Capt. Stephens, our Military Correspondent and the contributor of some of the best yarns to 'Club Chatter,' told me of this. 'Wedlake can't bear you saying "Sir" to him,' he told me one day: 'You see, old man, he wasn't brought up to say "Sir" to his father, as we were.'

Another grievance was the time I spent over lunch. I only took an hour, but Wedlake strongly objected to this waste of time in the best part of the day. He himself was a two-meals-a-day man, and his lunch consisted of a whisky-and-soda and a biscuit, and if he missed the biscuit it didn't matter. It was not only me he grumbled at, the whole staff was reproached for wasting time over lunch. 'Why don't you make a good breakfast?' he would say, 'then you wouldn't need to waste an hour in the middle of the day.'

One afternoon after he had hurled this question at me for the umteenth time, I said, 'Well, Mr. Wedlake, and what do *you* have for breakfast.'

'Oh,' he replied, settling down to the subject with relish, 'I always begin with a plate of porridge—lays a good foundation. Then I have a little bit of fish or an egg dish, but after that I have something solid—a chop or a bit of steak. But I have nothing else except a little fruit and a few pieces of toast and marmalade.'

Then I understood not only why he wanted no lunch, but why he sat in his office chair each morning as if no human power would ever get him out of it again.

In addition to my work on *To-Day*, I was an assistant editor of *The Sunday Special*, which belonged to the same syndicate and of which Wedlake was supposed to be editor. But Wedlake had a house at St. Margaret's Bay and went there every Friday night, not returning to London till Monday or often Tuesday, and no editor can exercise an effective control of a Sunday newspaper who is away from his office and the printers on the Saturday.

I was supposed to represent Wedlake on Saturday, and each Friday night he used to give me certain definite instructions. These were rarely carried out, but the omission to do so was not my fault. I was really in an exceedingly awkward position.

The News Editor of *The Sunday Special* was my old friend Leonard Rees—now editor of *The Sunday Times*—and he did not see eye to eye with Wedlake on many matters. After lunch on Saturdays I would leave the office in Essex Street and walk over to the Argus Printing Works where *The Sunday Special* was printed. I would follow my instructions, get the copy in my charge set up, and proceed to correct the proofs. Rees also had a set of proofs.

Presently he would look up and say, 'Hullo! what's this? I say, Rutter, this can't go in, you know?'

I would identify the proof and say, 'That, oh, Wedlake said we had got to put that in.'

'But we can't really. It wouldn't do at all.'

'My orders are that it *is* to go in.'

'All right, old chap,' Rees would say good-temperedly, we'll leave it till Mr. Schmidt comes and let him decide.'

Mr. Schmidt—of whom more anon—was the Managing Director of the Syndicate and the 'Magpie' of the City Page whose brilliant financial articles—execrably written by his own hand—were deciphered and decoded into English by Rees.

About 6 p.m. Schmidt would come to the printing-works as regularly as clockwork. Presently Rees would disentangle the proof in question and pass it over saying, 'What do you think about that, Mr. Schmidt? Mr. Wedlake says it is to go in, but I'm very doubtful about it.'

Schmidt would look it over and invariably reply, 'Certainly not, keep it out.'

As a matter of duty I would then say, 'Mr. Wedlake told me particularly that it was to go in.'

'No, no. We can't have it,' Schmidt would reply: and there the matter ended for the time being. After all,

what is a mere Editor to a Managing Director? especially when the Director is present and the Editor an absentee.

At ten o'clock every Monday morning I was at the office at Essex Street, and within half-an-hour the telephone bell would ring furiously and an equally furious voice would come booming over the wire from St. Margaret's Bay—'That you, Rutter? Didn't I tell you particularly that So-and-So must go in? Now you've left it out. What the devil . . .'

'Yes, I know, Mr. Wedlake,' I would reply, 'but Mr. Schmidt said . . .'

'Oh, Mr. Smith. Well, I'll speak to Mr. Smith about it to-morrow.' And he would ring off.

Wedlake always made a point of calling Schmidt 'Smith': it seemed to afford him some mysterious satisfaction.

This Saturday night controversy went on week after week till I was heartily sick of it. It was probably more unpleasant for me than anybody else—except, possibly, Wedlake—though I must say Rees always made things as easy for me as possible. It was my fate to hamper and worry him when he had a hundred things to attend to, to delay his making-up a page and generally to be more hindering than helpful, yet never once do I remember his visiting Wedlake's sins on my head or being anything but kind, considerate and friendly. He understood my position perfectly, and without tempting me to be disloyal knew just how I felt about it.

I liked Rees, and I never really took to Wedlake. Though it was my duty to be silent or to be the mouthpiece of my chief, my personal sympathies were on the other side and I fancy Rees guessed this to be so. At last I could stand it no longer, and made up my mind to go.

Whether Wedlake was riding for a fall I did not know, but it was clear to me that his fall was imminent and I did not wish to be involved in it. I heard there was a vacancy for a sub-editor on the *Daily Mail*. I applied for the job and got it. I remember vividly my first interview with the

editor, Thomas Marlowe. I sat in a chair on one side of his desk with a powerful electric reading-lamp glaring full on my face. He sat on the other side of the desk in deep shadow. It was quite dramatic.

'When can you come?' he asked, after the preliminaries had been decided in my favour.

'Well, I ought to give a month's notice,' I replied.

'Oh, that won't do,' he said, 'we want somebody who can come at once.'

'Very good, I'll come to-morrow,' I answered.

'That's better,' he replied. 'Come at six o'clock to-morrow.'

On the morrow and each day (except Saturdays) for a full month afterwards, I left the *To-Day* office in Essex Street at six o'clock and walked over to the *Daily Mail* office in Carmelite Street where I stayed till 2 a.m. Then back to rooms I took temporarily in Chancery Lane, then five hours' sleep—if I were lucky!—and at 10 a.m. I was back in the *To-Day* office. No wonder my health broke down a few months later.

I left *To-Day* on good terms with everybody and remained a regular contributor to it all the time I was on the *Mail*. I continued my weekly column of alleged humour, I wrote paragraphs for 'Club Chatter,' I did a series of short stories of Cambridge life—afterwards published in book form as *'Varsity Types*—and I was appointed dramatic critic. For this purpose I had to attend one or two matinees every week, Saturday being my only free evening in the week, and now and again I attended concerts and wrote about these also. My life was very full and never before or since have I been so well off, for I was so busy earning money that I never had time to spend any.

I soon left Chancery Lane and my mother and sister joined me in a tiny but delightful flat in Gray's Inn, on a top floor with a balcony overlooking the Bencher's Garden. That balcony was a godsend: it had just room for a couple of chairs and a small table. Again and again I have sat

there, utterly worn out, but revived by the green of the grass and the trees, cheered by the twittering of the birds, and nourished by the attentions of my mother and sister, who looked after me so devotedly and unselfishly. Without their ministrations I should have been a nervous wreck in three months.

It was in February, 1901, that I went to the *Mail*, and the strain of the double work during the first month told on me badly. From time to time I suffered horribly from neuralgia and an Irish doctor who attended me warned me that it was 'no use killing myself to live.' Fortunately I got an unexpected holiday and change when I wanted it most.

In April somebody came round the general news room to make out the holiday list for the sub-editors. I, of course, was one of the juniors and was almost the last to be approached. 'I'm afraid all the best months are gone,' said this good angel, 'when would you rather have your holiday, early or late?'

'What is the choice?' I asked.

'Well,' he replied, 'I'm afraid there's nothing now but the end of September—or May,' he added.

'I'll take mine in May,' I said promptly: and so it was arranged.

For long I had been wishing to see Venice. I felt that a good holiday was due to me, and I decided to spend May in Italy. Beyond taking the precaution to travel light, I made no particular plans. I packed a few necessaries in a bag which I could easily carry myself, I crossed by Dover, and from Calais I went straight to Milan without stopping anywhere. I was so tired that I slept most of the way. I remember tumbling out at Basle and getting some breakfast at the buffet, and being roused at Chiasso to go through the Italian customs. There a fellow traveller got into difficulties over some photographic materials he had brought from England. He was not prepared for the amount of duty he had to pay. So I lent him some money and he gave me his home address at Brescia and also the name of a

friend in Milan who, he said, would repay me. And the marvellous thing is that the friend did!

I arrived at Milan very early in the morning and felt wide-awake and full of energy. I raced round the town in the best American style, saw the Cathedral, the Brera and Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper' at Santa Maria delle Grazie, and I also called at a bank to get one of my circular notes changed. In the afternoon I took the train to Venice.

At Venice I stayed rather more than a week, and though of course I could not see everything, I saw a tremendous lot. It has always been a great satisfaction to me that I climbed to the top of the Campanile—which collapsed in the following year—and like all other tourists expressed my surprise when I found that no canals were visible in the view. I gazed with respect and awe on the paintings of Titian, Tintoretto and Paul Veronese, but I fell in love with Giovanni Bellini of whom previously I had heard less. I 'did' St. Mark's and the Doge's Palace and was really thrilled by the equestrian statue of Colleone; but I believe what I liked best was roaming on foot through the narrow streets in the mornings, getting hopelessly lost, but always finding some small intelligent child who guided me back to my hotel for a few coppers, and gliding about the canals in a gondola in the evenings. In those days the waterways of Venice were not desecrated by the presence of motor-boats, and the gondoliers had a picturesque brigand-like appearance —to which they often lived up—instead of looking, as they now do, like petty officers in the Royal Navy.

For some reason—possibly because of a dim memory of Catullus and 'Silver Sirmione'—the Lago di Garda, the largest of the Italian lakes, called me irresistibly. Coming back from Venice I got out at Desenzano, intending merely to have a look at it. I had lunch at the Due Colombe, where, I remember, I shocked the waiter by preferring an omelet to the live trout he insisted on pulling out of a pool and showing to me—'You no lika desa one'—splash, grab—'you lika desa one?' But I wouldn't have any of

them. I hate to think that anything I eat was once alive; to have the vitality of the poor flapping fish thrust on me in this way—no! eggs for me. After my omelet and some very good coffee, the waiter told me a steamer would be leaving Desenzano in about fifteen minutes.

'Where is it going to?' I enquired.

He explained that it was going to Riva, right at the far end of the lake, four hours' journey. It was an idea. I should see all the lake, not only a little bit of it. I decided to go. Picking up my bag—or rather, allowing the waiter to pick it up—I went down to the quay and embarked on the steamer. It was a perfect afternoon and for four hours we steamed slowly, zigzagging across the lake, through some of the loveliest scenery it has ever been my good fortune to behold. Never anywhere have I seen anything to equal the colour of the Lago di Garda, so strong and intense and yet so deep and soft.

Riva was then an Austrian town, and there I saw for the first time the white uniform of that gallant, historic, but unfortunate nation. Though I could speak no word of German and had no Austrian money, they were all very nice to me; indeed, I have always found the Austrians a charming, cultured people, very different from the Prussians and North Germans. But I was in some difficulty. There was no boat back to the Italian shore that night, and it was a Saturday. No steamer would leave before Monday morning. There was nothing for it but to stay the week-end at Riva, and I have never regretted doing so, though the weather on Sunday was unkind. It rained nearly all day, but that did not stop me from going out and walking through the wooded heights that fringed the lake.

What amazed me was that though it was raining, though the sky was dull and grey, the waters of the lake as seen through the trees were a brilliant sapphire blue. It was incredible. But for the evidence of my own eyesight, if any artist had painted exactly what I saw I should have said that the colour was grossly exaggerated. Riva taught me

a useful lesson. None of us know all that Nature can do in the matter of colour.

Monday morning it cleared up and I had pleasant weather for the return down the lake. I made no further stops and arrived at Milan some time in the afternoon. I had had two lazy, restful days, and now I was going to make up for lost time. I did some more sight-seeing, collected what was due to me from the friend of my friend of the train, and then thought I would like to see something of the night-life of Milan. I had left my bag at the station and had not taken a room at any hotel.

I drifted about the streets visiting a number of restaurants and cafés, and about one o'clock in the morning I found a café that was open all night. Here I decided to establish myself, and when I got tired of studying the other people I pulled a writing-pad out of my pocket and wrote a short story which I posted the next morning to the editor of *To-Day*. It was the one and only thing I wrote during my holiday, and it was a story, not of Italy, but of Cambridge.

About six in the morning I had the last of a series of coffees and chocolates and went to the railway station. Thence I went to Como and took the first steamer up the lake. I got out at Bellagio, leaving my bag *en depôt*. I walked about the place, saw some villas, acknowledged its beauty, but decided that it—like Cadenabbia just opposite—was far too fashionable to tempt me to stay. It was too like Cowes during the Squadron week to please my Bohemian tastes.

It was still quite early when I got back to the quay and found that a steamer was starting shortly for Colico at the far northern end of the lake. I embarked on it with my bag and took a ticket for ' all the way.' At Colico I got off and had lunch. I liked the place immensely. People who do not visit this arm of Lake Como miss a great deal. The scenery towards Colico is quite different from that round the southern ends of the lake, much wilder and grander : the mountains seem nearer. But though I liked

Colico, a quiet place, and made a note that it would be worth staying in at some other time, I did not want to stay there then. I was restless; I wanted to be on the move.

There was a steamer at the quay. Where was it going to? It was going to Lecco at the extreme end of the other southern arm which I had not yet visited. In shape Lake Como is like a ≺ turned on its side. Obviously Lecco was the place for me. On I bundled with my baggage and spent a lazy afternoon slowly steaming across the twenty-five miles or so which separate Colico from Lecco. It was growing late when we got there and I was ready for dinner.

Lecco was all right, not so good as Colico, but better than Bellagio: still I felt I did not want to stay the night at Lecco. The waiter was apologetic. He regretted there were no more steamers anywhere. But if he insisted the Signor could catch a train to Varenna. Varenna! excellent idea! I had passed Varenna coming down from Colico, it was about half-way down the lake on the eastern shore. I paid my bill and hurried off to catch the train. When I got out at Varenna it was evening, almost night. I strolled down to the water's edge and thought to myself, 'Well, I shall have to sleep here. I suppose I'd better go and look for a hotel soon.' Varenna was very nice, but still I felt dissatisfied. I felt I was on the wrong side of the lake.

As I stood there with my bag in my hand I suddenly heard a shouting and a commotion. I drew nearer to see what it was all about. Gradually I grasped what it meant. Men were shouting, 'Last boat for Menaggio! Last boat for Menaggio!' I ran, I sprinted, I dived, I jumped, I got on board. Menaggio was only just opposite, on the other side of the lake. When I stepped on to the quay I felt I was home at last. Menaggio was the real right thing. I did not hesitate for a moment, but marched straight up to the nearest hotel, asked for a room and deposited my bag. I had had a long day, but still I wanted to explore. I strolled along the shore, up and down, north and south. Out on the water were boat parties with guitars and mando-

lines and their singing and tinkling sounded pleasant in my ears. I sat down on a bench and looked around me. Really, life was very good. It seemed a pity to go in on so lovely a night. A little before midnight I stirred myself; it was no good staying there. I went to bed and slept soundly.

The next morning I was up betimes and took the funicular railway to Porlezza. There I got on the boat for Lugano where I stayed the best part of a week. I found a hotel at the Paradiso end which suited me, and liked Lugano both for itself and as a most convenient centre. It was getting very hot now in the middle of the day, but my energy was not diminished. I would get up very early in the morning, clamber anyhow up Mt. San Salvatore and have breakfast on the summit. Having well rested and feasted my eyes on the panorama below I would descend in a more leisurely fashion and get back to my hotel for lunch. After lunch one simply had to rest. A siesta was not a convention but a necessity. Then when the afternoon got cooler I went out again and made up in the evenings for the hours I had spent indoors from noon to three or half-past.

I made the usual excursion to Monte Generoso for the striking view from its summit of the Italian lakes and the Alpine chain; and I spent two delightful days on Lake Maggiore. I went from Lugano to Tresa by boat, from Tresa to Luino by rail, and from Luino I took another boat down Maggiore to Intra. There I got off and, burdened with no more luggage than I could stuff into the pockets of a mackintosh, I walked to Pallanza.

With that beautiful promontory I was enchanted: I thought then—and think still—it was the next best thing to the Lago di Garda. I decided to make it my headquarters for the day and was delighted to find a hotel with grounds stretching to the last point of the cape. From Pallanza I visited Isola Bella, but, to be candid, on close inspection, the Borromean Islands are too artificial to be wholly satisfying. Their obvious prettiness always struck

me as belonging to the order of wedding-cake ornamentation. They are much more pleasing seen from a distance, and Pallanza, with its luxurious semi-tropical vegetation, is *the* place from which to see them.

I returned to Lugano to pick up my bag with the idea of going straight on to Lucerne. I made an early start, but when the train had passed through the St. Gotthard tunnel I suddenly made up my mind to get out at Goeschenen. I wanted to see Andermatt and the Devil's Bridge. So I left my bag at the station and walked to Andermatt. When I got there I remembered I was not very far from the Furkha Pass. I had heard about that and considered it my duty to see the Rhone glacier. I made some enquiries, got my directions, and set off for the Furkha.

As I got higher and higher the sky overhead got clearer and clearer, though down in the valleys, in precipitous clefts between the mountains, there were heavy black clouds. Suddenly there was a thunderstorm, but I was high above it and had the curious experience of looking down from a height and seeing the lightning playing below me. Now and again there were rumbles which, later, I correctly guessed to be avalanches, but they were not near enough to cause alarm.

At last in the late afternoon I got to the Furkha Hotel. The summer season had not yet begun and it was not properly open. There was only a caretaker and his wife, but they said they could give me a room and a meal, so I went in. Two other persons were there, a young German student and a professional guide.

Now the student could not speak English and I had no German : but the guide spoke both languages. Very soon the last approached me and explained that the German student wanted very much to cross the Rhone glacier. That was why he had come there. (No doubt he said the same of me to the German boy.) But there was a difficulty. At this time of year it was not safe for two to attempt to cross. Three—that was quite another matter. Three

men roped together, with an experienced guide like himself—he pulled out a bunch of papers, would I look at his testimonials from English lords and gentlemen?—with three there was no danger at all, it was perfectly safe. But two, no; he was a careful man, and he would not risk it. To him it made no difference, but the young German gentleman wished to go and therefore had desired him to ask me whether I would join them and cross the glacier in the morning.

I said no, I was not prepared for climbing: I had only come there to see the glacier. 'You don't want to see it,' he protested indignantly, 'what is the use of looking at a glacier? You want to walk on it, you want to say when you get home that you have crossed the great Rhone glacier.'

I told him that I must return to Goeschenen the next morning, that I had left my luggage there, and must return for it.

'That is no difficulty,' he said. 'Where are you going to? Lucerne? Yes? Good, then I will telephone to the station at Goeschenen and they will send on your luggage to Lucerne. When you get there, it will be waiting for you at the station. We are used to this in Switzerland, there will be no trouble about it. Next morning we will get up early, we will cross the so magnificent Rhone glacier, I will take you to the Grimsel. There you have nice walk to Meiringen, lovely walk, beautiful scenery, downhill all the way. At Meiringen you get the train to Lucerne, and at Lucerne you find your luggage. You will be pleased. It will be the greatest experience of your life. You will never forget it. And you will oblige the German gentleman. I go now to telephone about your luggage.'

'Wait a minute,' I said weakening, 'what is all this going to cost.'

'For you,' he replied, 'it shall only be twenty francs. It is not my usual fee, but you are going to oblige the German gentleman, therefore I oblige you. Only twenty francs, I will not take more.'

It was foolish of me, no doubt, but I allowed myself to be persuaded. I thought it would be rather fun, though I knew I was not dressed for the part. It had been very hot in Venice and Lugano and I was still wearing a thin drill suit, and drill trousers are not the most suitable garments for tramping over snow and ice. Nor was my never-to-be-forgotten mackintosh likely to be helpful in any way.

Nevertheless the next morning I allowed myself to be roused about five o'clock. We swallowed some hot coffee, paid our bills, and started off with a coil of rope and a bottle of cold tea. When we got to the edge of the glacier the guide roped us up and the procession started. The guide was in front, then came the German student, and I brought up the rear.

Of our crossing I will say this only, that the guide was a true prophet when he declared that I should never forget it. There had been a fresh fall of snow during the night, and the snow was often up to our waists, never much lower than our knees. To wade in and out of this for hours, with only drill trousers on your legs, is an experience anybody might remember.

At last we approached the Grimsel Hospice, and our guide cried a halt. We sat down on the snow, drank what was left of the cold tea, and our guide made a farewell speech. 'We have now crossed the glacier, gentlemen,' he said, 'and my work is done. Down there before you is the road to Meiringen. You cannot go wrong. It is straight, straight. You have only to follow it. My home is over there,' he waved his arm vaguely towards the mountains; 'so here I must leave you.' He repeated this speech in German and then paused. We took the hint and produced our money. I noticed that the German also paid him only twenty francs—doubtless because he had only crossed to oblige the English gentleman.

'I thank you, gentlemen, I thank you. I wish you a pleasant walk. And now I must say good-bye.' He was off, swinging across the snow with great strides, and my

companion and I grinned foolishly at each other, for we both knew we had been ' done.'

Below us lay a great slope of snow, beneath it to the left we could see our road stretching away to the distance, while immediately at the foot, but more to the right, nestled the buildings of the Hospice. As I looked at it I saw a black figure come out and potter about with something.

Common sense and a memory of the Grand St. Bernard told me that this must be one of the monks. I did not altogether trust our guide, and thought it would be wise to make enquiries as to whether this really was the road to Meiringen. I made signs to the German that I was going down to speak to this man. Most unfortunately he not only had no English, but hardly understood a word of French. Still he was very docile and gave me no trouble then or afterwards, but meekly followed where I led him. I descended the slope and approached the priest.

' Pardon me, my Father,' said I, ' but will you have the goodness to inform me if that is the road to Meiringen ? '

' Yes, my son, that is the road to Meiringen.'

' And is it quite straight ? '

' Yes, it is a straight road, you cannot err.'

' And how far is it to Meiringen, my Father ? '

' About thirty kilometres, my son.'

Twenty miles ! and already I felt as if I had done forty. It had got to be faced, however, and there was no sense in wasting time on lamentations. I thanked the kindly priest, signalled to my companion, and strode off down the road. Twice I said ' Meiringen ' to my companion opening and shutting my hands in his face. He blinked and seemed to guess that I meant twenty somethings, but how was I to explain to him what a mile was ? And I was too upset to think of signalling to him in kilometres.

As the sun rose higher it grew hotter and hotter. No longer did I envy my German friend his knickerbockers and stockings, but was quite content with my drill suit. My only regret was that I had brought a mackintosh with me.

It was about nine when we left the Grimsel, and as it approached noon we came in sight of a hotel. The German pointed to his mouth. I assented. We went in, had lunch, and a good rest. But it was much worse walking after lunch. The German crawled and crawled, and every time we passed anywhere near a restaurant of any kind he would look at me piteously, raise his elbow and make a drinking gesture. I shook my head sternly. Thought I to myself, if we start that game we shall never get to Meiringen to-night. But he never altogether gave up hope, and intermittently gazed expectantly and raised his elbow all the way along till we came in sight of Meiringen.

It was past five as we entered the village and we were both of us pretty well done up with our walk in the heat. As we went through the street an extraordinary thing happened. A little ahead on our right was a humble-looking cottage-restaurant with a little garden in front of it. Over the fence leant a buxom but comely young woman. She smiled at me. I smiled back. And when we came abreast of the cottage she staggered me by saying in perfect English, 'You like some tea?'

I stopped at once. 'You speak English?'

'Oh yes,' she replied, 'I have been to England. I was in service there for two years.'

'This is the place for me,' thought I, 'I'm going in.' I turned to my German friend and began to semaphore. He gesticulated back pointing to a hotel in the distance. I could see that his soul craved for beer, not tea.

We shook hands and said good-bye in our own tongues. He clicked his heels, bowed, and went on his way as I turned in to the garden. I was shown into a tiny but scrupulously clean sitting-room by a beaming hostess who, as soon as I was inside, said, 'I know exactly what you want.'

'First you want a large pot of tea,' she continued.

'Yes,' said I.

'Then you want ham and eggs . . . '

'Angel!' I cried.

'And then you want lots of toast and jam.'

That girl had not been in England for nothing. She served me a splendid English meal—good tea, good ham, good eggs, good toast, good everything. It was delicious. It was the only time I have had really satisfactory English food abroad.

During the meal my hostess came and talked about England and London. I never saw another soul there, I asked no questions, and found out nothing about her. When I had finished my meal, she charged me very moderately for it, and we parted with compliments on both sides. Till I caught sight of myself in a glass, with a face like a lobster, I imagined I had really impressed her.

I caught a train to Lucerne in the evening, and there on arrival I found my bag waiting for me, as promised. I know no country in which luggage is less trouble than Switzerland. Once I arrived at Vevey with two out of seven articles of luggage, but all the other five were found and restored to me before the end of a week.

'Lovely Lucerne!' Yes, it is lovely. Nevertheless I have never been able to regard the town with any great affection. I can give no reasonable or logical explanation why I prefer Zurich, Geneva, Berne, Montreux, even Interlaken to Lucerne—and yet I do. It has always seemed to me that the author of a well-known hymn must have had Lucerne in mind when he wrote the lines:

> 'Where every prospect pleases,
> And only man is vile.'

If I could annihilate all the hotels save one, and have that to myself, I think I might get to like Lucerne. I am afraid I must be selfish. Yet I do not mind in the least sharing the pleasures of the trip from Fluelen to Lucerne with other passengers. I don't want the steamer to myself, it is only when I land that I find a plethora of mixed humanity unendurable. Lucerne is all right for a day—Thor-

waldsen's *Lion*, sniffed at by 'superior' persons, is a true and moving work of art, to which one may justly pay homage—but after a day I find Lucerne wearisome. On this my first visit I spent three days there, but one night was spent on the Rigi to see the sunrise, and another was spent on Pilatus. Yet even so and even then I left Lucerne with less regret than any other place I had visited.

A couple of nights in Paris, looking up old friends, re-visiting the Louvre and viewing the Salon, and my holiday was over. It was one of the best I have ever had, and I returned to London refreshed in mind, body and spirit. It was well that I had a good soaking in sunlight, for I was soon to say good-bye to it for six months.

During the summer I was appointed sub-editor in late charge of the *Daily Mail*. This meant that instead of going to the office at 6 p.m. and leaving at 2 a.m., I began work at 10 p.m. and had to stay on till 6 a.m. or later. From ten to two I performed the ordinary duties of a sub-editor; at 2 a.m. when the paper had gone to press and the rest of the staff had gone home, I remained in charge of the paper with a watching brief to wait on events.

My duties were not onerous, but they were responsible. All through the night telegrams came in, and on me lay the burden of deciding whether the news contained in any of them was of sufficient importance to justify the expense of re-plating and bringing out a special edition.

The greatest trouble my immediate predecessors had experienced had been in keeping awake. This did not worry me, for I had an adequate staff under me and periodically had strong tea brought in to keep me wide-awake. At two o'clock I left the sub-editor's room and took up a strategic position in the Library which then—as still no doubt—was a comfortable room exceedingly well equipped.

When I had no particular work to do, nothing to write and nothing I ought to read, I discovered an excellent method of keeping myself alert and interested while I was waiting for telegrams to arrive. The Library was plenti-

fully stocked with guide-books, maps, continental Bradshaws and time-tables of all kinds, and armed with a batch of these I would work out in minute detail the itineraries of imaginary journeys. I would plan, for example, a journey from Paris to Constantinople, following as much as possible the line of the Danube. I decided where I would stop, working out the time of my arrival, and then fixed a time for my departure. I noted where I had to change, where I could leave the train and take a steamer, and on what days at what times the steamers sailed from these towns. I put it all down exhaustively in black and white on paper, and through this recreation I learnt quite a lot about Europe and its geography.

The worst part of my job was a pessimistic conviction that I should always do the wrong thing. If I brought out a special edition the news was not good enough to justify re-plating ; if I didn't I ought to have done so. My most severe critic was Watney, the Foreign Editor. He was one of those men who imagine that the best way to keep a staff up to the mark is to find fault perpetually, and grunt discontentedly when complete satisfaction is given. This may work with some men, but it never worked with me.

One night after he had been finding fault with me for bringing out a special edition with news which he considered to be of minor importance, Watney incautiously said to me, ' Look here, Rutter, if you're not certain about anything, if you are in any way doubtful, you can always ring me up on the telephone. It's beside my bed, and I'd much rather you asked me whenever you are in any doubt.'

He gave me his number, which I duly noted, and for the next fortnight I am afraid I rather maliciously seized every possible opportunity of ringing him up between 4 and 5 a.m. to ask his opinion about some telegram that had come in. As time went on his answers grew shorter and shorter, and at last, after I had 'phoned him three mornings running, he came up to me in the evening, with something like a rueful smile on his face, saying, ' I say, Rutter, I don't want you

to ring me up about *everything*. Use your own judgment and don't bother me unless it's really something of importance.'

So I ceased worrying him, and he ceased worrying me. After that we got on quite well.

Having now my special job I to some extent got out of touch with my colleagues in the sub-editors' room, but I noted all the same the rapid changes in the room. Excluding the Chief Sub-Editor, there were twelve of us in the room, of whom when I came I was, of course, the junior. Ten months later I was the third senior man in the room, and we had had three different Chief Subs.

When I started our Chief was W. J. Evans, one of the nicest men and smartest journalists I have ever met. He was sharp as a needle, quick in decisions, but always most courteous and considerate. The work was done swiftly, smoothly, and efficiently ; but there was never the slightest sign of any hurry or fuss. Evans seemed to lounge about the room, speak slowly, be deliberate in his action and gestures ; yet everything got done at the double as it never did under any other man. His régime was too good to last. His heart really was not in the *Mail*, but in the *Evening News*, of which he became Editor. Evans really was only a loan from the *News* to ginger up the 'subbing' on the morning paper. I always think of Evans as he appeared one almost tropical night in a white drill suit which suited his slender figure to perfection. He was a dapper little man, who had in him the makings of a dandy.

After Evans came Smeed, a well-meaning Manchester man, amiable, but, like Martha, worried about many things. With him there was more haste and less speed, but it was an ordeal for anyone to follow Evans. During Smeed's reign, Andrew Caird, who I think was a friend of his, became a sub-editor. He was a big, heavy-looking man who came from Aberdeen, and during his first few weeks he was never tired of telling us how pleased he was to have got away from provincial journalism and to be on the staff of

a great London daily. To us Londoners, with our peculiar sense of humour, Caird then seemed a well-meaning fellow but rather slow and dull. None of us, I am sure, ever suspected that he was destined to beat the lot of us and become Sir Andrew Caird and a director of the company owning the journal of which he was then the junior sub-editor. But if we had kept our eyes open properly, we should have seen how quickly he began to climb. Before he had been three months in the room he was assisting Smeed to do the Chief's work: in less than six months Smeed had gone and Caird was Chief-Sub-Editor.

Of Alfred Harmsworth, afterwards Lord Northcliffe, I saw very little, but I have a vivid memory of his coming into our room one evening and giving the sub-editors a short address on how it behoved them to make the *Mail* a 'halfpenny *Times*.' We were never to forget the dignity of our profession, and he concluded:

'Each paragraph in the *Mail* should be written with Addisonian pomposity, relieved by a touch of American smartness.'

Other figures at the *Mail* in those days were my old friend Sidney Dark, then the Dramatic Critic, Hands the 'star' reporter and correspondent, Wilson the naval expert, Benham the Librarian and Leader Writer, and Sir George Arthur the Society Editor. The last was the particular joy of the composing room. Immaculately attired in evening dress, and dangling a slip of paper from his elegant hand, I can still hear him drawling to a convulsed compositor, 'I say, my good fellow, would it bore you to set this up?'

The most exciting experience I personally ever had at the *Mail* was in September, 1901, when President M'Kinley was assassinated. On Friday, 13th September, it was known that his condition was hopeless. All through the afternoon and evening we expected the news of his death to come through at any time. Bulletin after bulletin arrived chronicling the fluctuations of his heart's action, but still

Mr. M'Kinley breathed. He was still alive when our main edition went to press about two o'clock. Some of the senior members of the staff lingered on, expecting the fatal news to come in any minute, but one by one they gave up, Watney being the last to go.

I was left alone with precise and clear instructions. If the news of the death came in time for me to get out a special edition before eight o'clock, I was to go ahead: but after eight o'clock I was to leave it to the *Evening News*. Everything was prepared and in readiness. The posters were printed. The new head-lines for the principal news-page were set up:

DEATH OF
MR. M'KINLEY.
A TRAGIC COLLAPSE
RAPID FAILURE OF THE
HEART'S ACTION
THE LAST MOMENTS.

The wording of the announcement had also been chosen and set up in type leaving me to fill in only the exact time of the death:

'We deeply regret to announce that President M'Kinley expired at . . . this morning at Buffalo after a tragically sudden collapse . . . .'

The whole article was written, the plate was ready for printing, only wanting the one thing, the hour of death.

Four o'clock came, no news; five, six, seven. It looked as if after all I should have to leave it to the *Evening News*. I wanted no tea to keep me awake that morning. For the last hour I had been too excited to sit in my chair. I paced up and down the Library, peering outside the door again and again to see if a boy was coming. At last, about 7.25 a.m., in came a boy with a telegram. I tore open the envelope, and after one look I was racing up to the composing room three stairs at a time. 'Two Fifteen,' I shouted the moment I was inside the door, 'a quarter-past two.' A comp. whipped out the type and dropped it into

the plate. There was no time for proofs. I just looked at the metal to see he had got the time right and shouted, 'Right away.' Off went the plate to the foundry, and off went I to the publishing department to warn them that the special edition was coming along.

Then I ran to the Manchester Room. A telegraph operator was seated in front of his instrument fast asleep with his head on his arms. I shook him roughly and woke him up. 'Get on to Manchester at once,' I said, 'and tell them M'Kinley died at 2.15 a.m.' He began tapping. Presently, 'I can't get a reply,' he said. 'Try again,' I insisted. He went on tapping. It was no use. Evidently they had given it up and gone home. 'What's your name?' I asked. He told me and I scribbled a note saying So-and-So had twice tried to get on to Manchester between 7.30 and 7.35 a.m., but could get no reply. I signed it and said, 'Give that to your relief and tell him to see that Mr. Blumenfeld, the *News* Editor, gets it as soon as he comes here in the morning.' I went down to the Publishing Office. Already the men were handing out posters and parcels of papers to the boys.

There was nothing more I could do. I went back to the Library, got my hat and coat and left the building.

As I walked up Chancery Lane about a quarter to eight newsboy after newsboy ran past me with *my* paper shouting, 'Death of President M'Kinley,' and carrying the *Mail* poster. Not a sign did I see of any other morning paper with the news. I heard afterwards the *Daily Express* had abandoned hope just half-an-hour too soon. Some hours later *The Times* came out with a special edition, but by that time I was in bed and asleep. The *Daily Mail* again was first with the news.

It was exciting, and the work was not uncongenial to me, but undoubtedly it was a strain. All that winter of 1901-1902 I hardly ever saw the sun unless it was the first thing in the morning. Unless I had to go to a theatrical matinee, I slept till two or three in the afternoon, and by the time

I had had my bath and dressed it was beginning to get dark. The awful part came when I couldn't sleep. As luck would have it the Benchers of Gray's Inn chose this time to repair the roof, and my bedroom was immediately underneath.

About eight o'clock in the morning, when I had just got to sleep, the men began to work on the roof. I never got used to it; they always woke me up, and it was terribly difficult to get to sleep again. There were mornings when I was at my last gasp, and I began to fear that my health might become seriously and permanently affected. Once I fainted dead off in the *Mail* office, the only time in my life I have ever done such a thing; but though everybody was very nice about it, and I was given some days off, there was no disposition to put me back to normal hours, and nobody anxious to take on my special job.

Meanwhile there had been great changes in Essex Street also. Soon after I left *To-Day*, Wedlake had ceased to be editor of *The Sunday Special*. The nominal editor now was Hermann Schmidt, the real editor was Leonard Rees. I began to wonder how long Wedlake would remain editor of *To-Day*. I was still a contributor to *The Sunday Special*. I had begun to write art criticisms—of which more later—and I used to see Rees from time to time.

One day in February he said: 'Mr. Schmidt would like to see you. Can you go down to his office in Lombard Street next Monday at 4 p.m.'—'Yes,' said I, wonderingly.

'Good,' said Rees, 'then I'll tell him you're coming.'

'What's up?' I asked.

'Well,' replied Rees, 'don't let it go any further, but Wedlake is leaving us altogether. He is going to join Horatio Bottomley.'

'Who's to be the new editor?'

'I don't know. I don't think anything is settled yet. But if you'd like to go back, I think there'll be a place for you.'

Hermann Schmidt—'Silver Schmidt' as they called him in the city—was then a member of the firm of Corgialegno

& Co. in Lombard Street, and it was to this office that I went at four on the following Monday afternoon.

Schmidt told me what I had already heard from Rees about Wedlake and then asked me if I would like to go back to *To-Day*. I said I thought I should, but it depended to some extent on whom I should have over me.

'You won't have anyone over you,' said Schmidt.

I gasped.

'What I propose,' he proceeded, 'is that you and Sampson should be joint editors.'

Now Sampson I knew. He had been my predecessor under Wedlake and when I went to the *Mail* he returned to *To-Day*. But Sampson was a consumptive, and his health was very bad. It was chiefly because he had to winter out of London that I got my foot in the *To-Day* office, and I knew for a certainty that Sampson daren't stay in England long and was already negotiating to get a job in South Africa. Schmidt's offer meant that within a comparatively short time I should be editor of *To-Day*, with full responsibility. And I was still only twenty-five.

'So you see,' Schmidt continued, 'you'll have nobody over you, but myself and the board of directors.'

From a monetary standpoint there was nothing in it. Schmidt offered me exactly what I was getting from the *Mail*, and I was already drawing very nearly as much from *To-Day* as a contributor. I was really going to have a drop of income, but I never hesitated for a minute. What he offered me was not riches, but it was a Position. I thought I was extraordinarily lucky. It was not yet three years since I had left Cambridge and I was being given control of a weekly with a great literary reputation. I resolved to endeavour to justify my selection. I closed with Schmidt's offer at once; handed in my resignation at the *Daily Mail* office, and in March, 1902, I returned to Essex Street to sit in the chair which Wedlake had only lately vacated.

At this time my eldest brother was living at Rottingdean and when I stayed with him I saw a good deal of Rudyard

Kipling, who was the most famous resident in what was then a very quiet little village. Kipling founded a rifle club at Rottingdean in 1900, and my brother, who in his early days had been a keen member of the London Scottish, also took a great interest in the range and often acted as Kipling's lieutenant in promoting the welfare of the club. I remember the enthusiasm for shooting was so great in the village that at one time it was a regular Sunday morning amusement to have 'pot-shots' with revolvers at floating corks from the disused (and now vanished) pier which had once been the landing-stage for the electric 'spider' from Brighton.

In January, 1902, Kipling and his family were staying at Woolsack Cottage, a retreat in a corner of Cecil Rhodes's estate at Rondesbosch, near Capetown, where Kipling—whose constitution was then by no means robust—spent several winters and where I have always understood he wrote the greater part of *Kim*. In connection with one of these visits I remember a little thing which made an extraordinary sensation in the village. Before he left Rottingdean to go to South Africa, Kipling ordered a carriage to meet the train arriving at Brighton at 5 p.m. on the following 3rd of May. It was a long way ahead to make arrangements, but sure enough on the 3rd May Kipling arrived at the Brighton terminus punctual to his appointment and I suppose tea was ready for him by the time he reached his Sussex home. On the following Saturday he visited the rifle-range and received congratulations on a punctuality which few literary men can rival.

## VII

# INTRODUCING JACK LONDON AND OTHERS

Sentimental associations, admittedly, tinge our retrospect of the past with rose-colour. It seems to me that there never was so pleasant a place of business as the old *To-Day* office at 8 and 9 Essex Street, never so happy a family in any office as our staff. I cannot judge the place or the people impartially for I love them all, even to the office boy, with that enduring affection which, Conrad has told us, an old master-mariner feels for his first command.

Our editorial offices consisted of a suite of three rooms on the second floor. First came a large room with a counter, behind which were the desks and tables of the accountants and advertising staff, four men and three women, one of whom was my invaluable secretary and amanuensis, Miss May. Next came a smaller room shared by my co-editor and myself; and beside this was a rather larger room, sacred to *The Sunday Special*, of which the sole inhabitant was my friend Leonard Rees. But our periods of feverish activity rarely coincided, for on Rees's busiest day, Saturday, we were out of the office by one o'clock, and our day for going-to-press, Monday, was his day of rest.

For all the four years we were working together in that office I never remember one row, one unpleasant scene, or one disagreeable incident. We had difficulties, of course, occasional misunderstandings, but the tempers were good throughout and harmony reigned. At four o'clock each afternoon Miss May would make tea and bring it round to

us. That was the time to knock off for a quarter of an hour and indulge in chat. Rees would open his door and look in to see how we were going on : or I would go into his room, cup in hand, and see how he was getting on. To be candid, I suppose I must confess that I *have* worked harder than I did there ; but I doubt if I ever worked more efficiently, and certainly I have never worked under pleasanter conditions.

Like most editors of my acquaintance, I soon discovered that it was impossible to write anything more than a note or a paragraph in the office. There were too many other things to be done, correspondence to be dealt with, callers to see, orders to give, proofs to correct. All my writing was done out of office hours in my home at Gray's Inn.

Happy in my office, I was equally fortunate in my home. Never have I had more congenial quarters than that top-floor flat at 3 Gray's Inn Place : never have I known a better servant than the gentle, soft-voiced Olive who did everything for us, and was content to sleep in the kitchen, who was so devoted to my mother that she stayed with us for six years and hardly liked to leave her even to get married. Though the flat was so diminutive, our life flowed smoothly, and there was room for everything and everybody, including a grand piano, a dog and a parrot. But even the parrot learnt that it must keep silence when I was about to write ! The bathroom was my dressing-room, my bedroom was also my study ; the general sitting-room was both refectory and salon, and when it was very crowded there was always room for two more on the balcony.

Every morning about half-past nine I would leave Gray's Inn to take what must surely be one of the most delightful walks in the city of London. Crossing Holborn I would walk a few yards down Chancery Lane, and then turning through a passage on the right, enter Lincoln's Inn opposite Stone Buildings. Through Lincoln's Inn my way went, past the Chapel and out into Lincoln's Inn Fields. Turning round by the post-office a couple of dozen strides down Carey Street brought me to the passage between Clement's

Inn and the Law Courts. From the top of those steps each morning I feasted my eyes on the spire of St. Clement Dane's —surely one of the most gracious of Wren's lovely towers— and as the weather changed and the seasons varied I would note the subtle changes of colour in that dove-grey building against the London sky. Keeping my eye on the spire and the picturesque sky-line of the Strand, I would descend the steps beside the Law Courts, cross the Strand, and so to Essex Street.

Lives there the man with soul so dead that does not envy me my happiness in having so fair a path to follow morning after morning for full five years? After my own Gray's Inn—to which affection was in some measure a matter of loyalty—my heart was given to Lincoln's Inn, which reminded me of the Courts I had so lately left behind at Cambridge. As winter waned and spring approached I watched the corner of New Square for the first bursting into flower of the lilac tree.

How exciting it was to see it bud, and with what rapture each year would I hurry back to lunch one spring day and excitedly inform my mother that the lilac was out. Those pinkish-purple blossoms went singing through me, and spring after spring I wanted to pour out my delight in a poem with the recurring refrain,

"And the lilac's out in Lincoln's Inn."

Considering that I was an editor with full power to print and publish anything of my own that I jolly well pleased, I often feel that it showed remarkable self-restraint that I never inflicted my own verse on the readers of *To-Day*. But the truth is that though I racked my brains all those five years, and have often done so since, never have I been able to find any other lines which satisfied me as being worthy of the subject, and fit to match the music of 'The lilac's out in Lincoln's Inn.' That is why my readers escaped one spring poem which threatened them annually.

With my colleague Philip Sampson I got on capitally. All

he wanted was to review the books and do his own special column ; for the rest he let me do pretty well as I liked with the paper. But at first there was not very much that we could do, because we had to use up the serials which our predecessor had bought, and the articles and stories he had definitely accepted. We did our best to lighten the paper in other ways, cut out some 'stodgy' features and introduced what we believed to be more 'live' matter ; but by the time we had dissipated the bulk of Wedlake's legacy, Sampson had found an opening in South Africa and had left me alone. With the remarkable kindness and confidence that they always showed me, Schmidt and his co-directors left me practically free to choose my own colleague. I thought at once of Ladbroke Black, who at the time had no regular billet. The *Morning Herald* had ceased publication for some time, and another journal for which he worked and to which I also had once or twice contributed, *The Phoenix*, edited by the witty but erratic James Davis—better known as Owen Hall, author of ' The Geisha ' and other musical plays—was also dead. I wrote to Black, who was then staying with his people at Torquay. He jumped at the idea, accepted, came to London at once, and so began a collaboration which lasted for three years.

From the proprietors' point of view I had three great advantages when I was appointed editor of *To-Day*. I was not a director of any printing firm, I was not a director of any firm of process-engravers, and I was not interested in any paper manufactory. Therefore I was perfectly prepared to buy my goods in the cheapest market. This I did. At the first opportunity I terminated all existing contracts and got fresh tenders from different firms for paper, printing and the making of blocks for illustrations. In this way without in the least degree altering the appearance or cheapening the material of the journal, I was able in a few months to reduce the technical cost of production by twenty pounds a week. This pleased my Board of Directors very much, and I have thought since that it must have influenced them

in giving me their continued confidence. Hermann Schmidt was especially delighted, because my action accorded so well with a favourite maxim of his which he never tired of repeating to me at least once a week—

'Anybody can show me how to spend money; you show me how to *save* it.'

I was game enough to save all the money I could on these technical matters, but I did want to spend money on contributions. That was the one point on which Schmidt and I never agreed, and it was the point on which the journal was ultimately wrecked.

As soon as I could get anything approaching a free hand with the contents, the most marked innovation that I made was to do away with the serial story. My policy was to make short stories, complete in each number, a leading feature of the journal, as they had been when Jerome was editor. I argued that if we wished to increase the circulation—the universal wish of all newspaper proprietors—then we must consider the occasional buyer as well as the regular reader.

Now my firm belief—to which I still adhere—is that nothing is more irritating to the occasional buyer than to purchase a paper to read in the train and then discover that a number of pages are occupied by some section of a serial story, the beginning of which is a mystery to him, and the end of which he is never likely to know.

In a daily paper so small an amount of space relatively is taken up by the serial and so small a proportion of the readers pay any attention to it, that its presence does no harm. But in a weekly magazine-journal like *To-Day* it was impossible to squeeze an instalment of a serial in an obscure corner: either it had to be a conspicuous feature or it had to be absent. I thought it better it should be absent. The way to increase the circulation was not to upset the occasional buyer but to please him, to make him buy it again, to turn him into a regular reader if possible. The serial hindered this; good short stories would help.

As for the delusion that a serial helps to bind readers to a paper and keep its circulation steady, I have always been convinced that a series of short stories, with a central character, but each complete in itself, answers that purpose equally well. I am well aware that it is a fetish with publishers that the public 'does not like volumes of short stories,' and though the success of Kipling, O. Henry and the 'Sherlock Holmes' series affords ample evidence to the contrary, I expect to hear publishers repeating this nonsense to my dying day. As a sober fact there are millions of people—notably the great army that reads nightly in bed—who prefer short stories to all others IF *only they are good enough.*

I pinned my faith in the short story then, and I had another conviction. I believed that the public was as sick of 'love stories' as I was myself. In this I was probably wrong. I do not set myself up as having been a model editor. Far from it: I was a sincere editor. I did not contemplate in the least giving the public what it wanted. I was determined to give it what I thought it was good for it to have. I was very young. I did not think it good for the public to be surfeited with love stories and what is now known as 'sob stuff.' I wanted to give them strong, virile, brave stories of man's life, thought and action, the kind of stories Kipling and Conrad were writing. But alas! My directors would not supply me with adequate funds to purchase stories from these literary giants. I had to look elsewhere.

I let it be known among the Literary Agents and publishers' travellers that I was looking out for series of really good and strong short stories for serial use, and that I did not mind in the least if they were by quite new authors. I could not afford great names, but I would do my best to get great stories.

One day Ward Lock's traveller came to me with a parcel of a dozen short stories which he had just got over from America. He said they were good though the author was totally unknown, and had never yet had any of his work

published in England. I took the stories home with me and read them through that week-end. They were grim, granite-like stories of life in the far north of America. I had never read anything like them before, but I knew they were exactly what I wanted.

On the following Tuesday the traveller called again and I asked him what he wanted for the stories. He said for the serial use he only wanted one guinea a thousand, and I could have two more volumes of short stories by the same author at the same price if I liked. I bought the first series of stories on the spot, and got him to give me an option on the other two for a fortnight in order that I might have time to put the matter before my board of directors.

That week I announced that *To-Day* would shortly publish the first of a series, 'Tales of the Far North,' by Jack London. Yes, that was the author, and I was the first English editor to publish Jack London's work. Every week I had to attend a meeting of the Board of Directors, and I pleaded earnestly both at the meeting and privately with Schmidt for permission to buy at once the two other books by Jack London and hold the stories for future use. But the directors were obdurate. 'Why did you want to buy more stories now,' asked Schmidt, 'when you have twelve yet to publish?' 'Because,' I explained, 'we shall lose them: if we don't buy them now, somebody else will.'

'Very well,' replied Schmidt imperturbably, 'then you buy others.' In vain I protested that short stories of this calibre were as scarce as diamonds: that it was a chance of a lifetime. I begged, I stormed, I nearly cried. All my purblind directors could see was that I was asking them to spend about £150 on something they could not consider in the least urgent. The finances of the paper were not such that £150 or so could be spent lightheartedly to satisfy a whim of mine. Schmidt went back to his eternal refrain: 'Anybody can tell me how to spend money; you show me how to save it.' 'But this *will* save money in the end, Mr.

Schmidt,' I raved. But no, he could not see it, and I had to let the chance go by.

My policy was completely justified. As soon as we dropped the serial and began the short stories our circulation rose steadily and it increased with a jump after the first half-dozen of Jack London's stories had been printed. *To-Day* began to get back to its old literary reputation, and I was bombarded with stories by young aspiring authors. Even the directors were pleased with the 'Tales of the Far North,' afterwards published in book form under the title of *The White Silence*—and told me they were 'first rate.' But I could not persuade them even then to buy the serial rights of the other two books.

About eighteen months later Schmidt said to me one afternoon when I was down at his office in Lombard Street, 'Why don't you give us some more short stories by that Jack London?'

'I'll be delighted to do so if you'll pay for them,' I replied.

'But they're only a guinea a thousand,' Schmidt protested.

'Ah!' said I, getting some of my own back, 'that was nearly two years ago. Jack London's rate now is six guineas a thousand words, and you can't get any stories by him for less.'

'Oh!' said Schmidt.

'You'll remember that I wanted you to let me buy more of his stories at a guinea a thousand and hold them. . . .''

'Yes, yes, I know,' he answered testily.

'Well, shall I buy them now?' I asked.

'No, no, of course not. We can't afford to pay six guineas a thousand for stories.' He became ingratiating. 'You find another. You found one good man, you'll soon find somebody else.'

But writers like Jack London are not found so easily.

Ever since *The Octopus* appeared I had been a great admirer of the work of Frank Norris, and I was very set on

getting something by him for *To-Day*. But it proved a difficult task. After endless negotiations with American correspondents I finally succeeded in securing the British serial rights of his short story *A Deal in Wheat*.

This was really a summary of his great trilogy, *The Octopus*, *The Pit* and *The Wolf*—the last of which he never lived to complete—and it traced in a brief, vivid and dramatic manner the history of a crop of wheat from its agricultural genesis, through the chicanery of middlemen, till it reached consumers in danger of starvation in a far corner of distant Europe. Throughout Norris was bent on proving that what was play to Chicago financiers often meant death to women and children in Europe. In intention, if not in actual execution, it was the greatest short story I had the privilege of publishing.

# VIII

## SOME 'AMAZING' DOCUMENTS

Mixed up with my memory of Frank Norris is an extraordinary incident I have never forgotten. It happened on a Monday when, as usual, the business of seeing the paper to press and correcting the final page-proofs had reached a crisis. I was too busy to see anyone, and I was very nearly irritable. It is the time when something is sure to go wrong.

In came Miss May. 'There's a gentleman outside who insists on seeing the editor.'

'What sort of a gentleman?' I snapped.

'A coloured gentleman,' was the amazing reply.

'Good Lord? I haven't any time for coon songs,' I said, 'You see him, Miss May, and find out what he wants.'

She came back in a few moments. 'It's about an article he's written, Mr. Rutter. But he won't leave the manuscript. I've asked him to. He still wants to see you. He says he can explain it all in five minutes.'

'But what is the article about?' I enquired.

'Oh, I don't know. Shall I ask him?'

'Well, yes. Perhaps you'd better.'

Miss May returned breathlessly: 'He says it's about the creation of the world?'

I gasped. A man who could explain all about the creation of the world in five minutes was a person worth seeing. But alas! my immediate task was to create another number of *To-Day*, and I had about half-an-hour left to do it in. I renounced the opportunity to penetrate the secret of a cosmic mystery. 'Tell him to call to-morrow, Miss May.

But get rid of him. I can't see him to-day.' But he never called again. Perhaps he knew too much to live.

Only once was I guilty of deliberate sensationalism. Among our contributors was a writer named Chris Healy, a true Bohemian whom I had known in the Latin Quarter. Healy had met a number of interesting people and some of his reminiscences made very good reading. One of the articles he sent us contained a story of a meeting between Oscar Wilde and Esterhazy, at the time of the Zola trial in Paris.

It was a perfectly innocuous story, the point of it being that Wilde had humorously told the writer that his private opinion on the affair was—' Zola wrote the bordereau at the dictation of Dreyfus, and Esterhazy took it round to the German Embassy and sold it for fifteen francs.' It was not much of a story really, but the conjunction of the names of Wilde and Zola struck me as having possibilities, and gave me an idea for a poster. That week I did not trouble to make out any special list of contents for our weekly poster, but contented myself by issuing a poster with the simple statement :

OSCAR WILDE
AND ZOLA :
AN AMAZING
ANNOUNCEMENT.

That was all, but it was enough.

Having seen this poster duly printed on Monday night, I awaited the result on Wednesday morning when the paper was published. I expected a good sale, but it beat all my expectations and created a record. The men selling *To-Day* in the streets kept coming back to our publishing office on the ground floor for more parcels of the journal. According to the office-boy everybody in the Strand was buying *To-Day*. I felt that I must be a spectator of this unprecedented sale.

At the Fleet Street corner of Chancery Lane there used to be, and may be still, a pavement vendor of weekly journals.

He always did well with *To-Day*, but never before or after did he do so well as this week. Beside him tied to the railings flaunted our shocking but alluring poster. I took up my station on the opposite side of the road and watched. Presently a man came hurrying round the corner from the Law Courts. Our poster caught his eye: he stopped. He looked round nervously, approached our vendor furtively, bought a copy of *To-Day*, which he folded up and thrust in his pocket as he hurried along.

Another man got off a 'bus, saw the poster, bought the paper, and he also folded it up and put it quickly in his pocket. So it went on, young men, old men, well-dressed men, shabby men: they all bought the paper and they all hid their purchase with the utmost celerity. How disappointed they must have been when they unfolded it. What *did* they expect to find inside? *O tempora, o mores!*

This experience, and others less discreditable, have convinced me that there is no one word so effective in catching pennies when used on a poster as this word 'Amazing.' It seems to stimulate all the insatiable curiosity of mankind and conjure coppers from the depths of a Scotsman's pockets. Next to our Wilde-and-Zola issue, the largest sale of any single number of *To-Day* during my editorship was brought about by a poster which contained not a single name, but only these three words:

AN
AMAZING
HOAX.

Like most young editors, I suppose, I was not above 'taking a rise' out of a contemporary when a favourable opportunity presented itself. I read a number of daily papers in those days, among them being *The Morning Leader*, which I took chiefly for the amusing 'Sub Rosa' column by Spencer Leigh Hughes. It was after the return of the 'Discovery' from her expedition to the South Pole and an exceedingly technical controversy regarding the construction of the ship had appeared in the correspondence columns of

*The Times*. The controversy spread to other papers, and presently my attention was drawn to a letter in the *Leader*, which read very strangely even to a layman totally uninformed on the technicalities of shipbuilding.

This letter was followed by a second and yet a third, each one more fatuous than the other, and the last rising to a dizzy pinnacle of cheerful idiocy which never before or since have I seen equalled in journalism. It was incredible that any daily paper should deliberately play such a joke on its readers ; and it was equally hard to believe that in a roomful of sub-editors there was not one man who could see that the whole correspondence was a hoax. Somebody was pulling the leg of the *Leader*, and pulling it very cleverly.

Black and I roared over the letters. It was too good a joke to keep to ourselves. We decided to reprint these letters, with a few pointed comments, and this we did. This truly ' amazing ' hoax began (appropriately enough) on 1st April, 1903, when the following letter, having apparent reference to a serious controversy, appeared in the ' Correspondence ' columns of the *Leader* :

THE ' DISCOVERY '

Sir,—' Sympathiser ' has evidently not taken into consideration the effect of salt water on Eichenflopper steel plates in such a low temperature. These plates, as every practical engineer should know, are riveted by the best copper mergugger bolts, which bring leakage to a minimum.

A slight leakage, however, was inevitable, taking into consideration the action of animalculae and the straining owing to the pressure of the pack ice and the undercurrents, of which navigators know nothing.

Yours, etc.,

F. Hinton Fraser.

Metal Exchange, E.C.

For the benefit of those who do not remember the original controversy, I may state that the question to which this document pretended to refer was one affecting the 'Discovery's' build and the material used in her construction.

Of course, ' Eichenflopper steel plates ' (as the name would suggest) have no more existence in fact than ' mergugger ' bolts. The reference to ' action of animalculae ' was so blatantly absurd that one wondered why the sub-editors should have failed to detect it. Up to this point the joke was neither so subtle nor so good that one need brag about its detection. But, judge of our unmitigated astonishment when on 15th April—that is to say a fortnight later—the *Morning Leader* allowed its leg to be pulled in an even more violent way, and obviously by the same person :

THE ' DISCOVERY '

Sir,—With reference to the leakage that befel the ' Discovery ' during her successful trip towards the Southern Pole, I quite agree with Mr. Hinton Fraser that the Eichenflopper plates used on that occasion were in every way a success, and leakage was brought to a minimum.

This discussion recalls to me the trip of the whaling sloop ' Urumtees ' in 1876, when this vessel was chartered by Capt. von Steiner, an enthusiastic Polar explorer.

On the vessel's arrival at Solothurn, I had the honour of boarding her and making experiments with the plates on this vessel, and applied the celebrated Eisbein test, calcium oxide.

I found the molar indentation of animalculae had taken place, and the vessel had leaked in consequence.

Yours, etc.,

H. Macreal.

Threadneedle House, E.C.
*April 14th*, 1903.

This letter, in all its unblushing idiocy, was printed boldly by the *Morning Leader* on the day in question. The reader will observe that from the point of view of impudence, it is a great improvement upon its predecessor. First, there is ' the whaling sloop " Urumtees".' The editorial staff of the *Morning Leader*, naturally, did not remark the humour of this phrase. Secondly, there is ' Solothurn,' which is a far from obscure town, situated in the middle of Switzerland. Thirdly, we permitted ourselves the pleasure

of pointing out that 'Eisbein' is the German for pig's trotter.

Emboldened by the success of previous experiments, the author (or authors) of these letters produced a third epistle. This document was so wholly unaffected in its deliberate inanity that it is difficult to conceive of its being taken seriously by a child. The *Morning Leader*, however, seized upon these three hundred words of undisguised 'tommy rot' and, in apparent good faith, presented them to the world as a serious contribution to a scientific controversy :

THE 'DISCOVERY'

Sir,—I feel greatly interested in the discussion as to the merits of Eichenflopper plates, being carried on in your valuable paper.

Some three years ago, through the courtesy of the manager, I was shown over the works at Andermatt, where these plates are manufactured, and where most of the world's biggest ships are fitted. I was greatly struck with the huge stack of machinery used in the punching of the rivet crafters and lumbers, and the great precaution taken to prevent the warping of the steel grungers that overlap the bilgers which the plates are cast from. The exactness of the grab chain when entering the flying wood crank was astounding. The fritishness caused by the slinging bungers can be distinctly felt by placing one's hand on or near any small quantity of waste or fire damp when the pressure gauge indicates 80 per cent. lbs. to the inch, which pressure the 'Discovery' had to undergo.

As all engineers know, in fixing the plates, the pressure (automatic) should be placed clear of the plate, to allow for the warping, and the steam would consequently clink the top flying clunkers, instead of their being any chance of clunking the clinkers, as in the case of the 'Discovery.'

Yours, etc.,

Frederick Tinson.

104 Fenchurch Street, E.C.
*April 16th*, 1903.

Beyond pointing out that Andermatt, like Solothurn, is situated in Switzerland, we did not think it necessary to

heighten the effect of this document by comment. We did, however, feel it was our pleasant duty to congratulate London on possessing that *rara avis* an unsophisticated daily newspaper, and we expressed our indebtedness to the *Leader* for providing us with a new and entirely original geography of Europe.

I never succeeded in finding out who was the perpetrator of this record hoax, but I sometimes suspect a witty member of Pelissier's original 'Follies' troupe, for this nimble comedian was the first to bring the correspondence to my notice.

It was easier to find humour, conscious or unconscious, in the columns of a contemporary, than to discover a new humorist to grace the pages of *To-Day*. That was an ambition I never fulfilled to my complete satisfaction. At one time I had great hopes of W. H. Koebel, who made his debut as a writer in our pages, but though Koebel has developed into a travel-writer of distinction, Fate did not intend him to be recognised as a humorist. He was a cheery little fellow, in business then, with an office in London and a home at Bembridge, Isle of Wight. His days were equally divided between his office, his home, and the train and steamer. For five days in the week he made the double journey between the Isle of Wight and London, up in the morning and back again at night. A man who could keep this up for a considerable period and still retain a sense of humour struck me as being promising material.

I also got Neil Lyons to write for us, but though he was not so well known then as he is now, I could not claim him as a discovery, for he had already been writing in *The Clarion*, where his contributions were a distinctive feature. Another writer we tried to push was Frank Richardson. He had been with Black on the staff of *The Phoenix*, and Richardson's rather subtle humour had always appealed to me strongly. I have never forgotten a column of 'Unsolicited Testimonials' which he contributed to 'Jimmy' Davis's journal. The best of the batch was addressed to

Alderman Treloar of cripples-and-carpets fame, and ran as follows :

Dear Sir,
Your doormats !
Oh my dear sir,
Yours faithfully.

Richardson was also a clever caricaturist and we thought at one time he might be a second Max Beerbohm. But Richardson had a weakness which proved fatal. He was a barrister and the favourite target for his witticisms was Sir Edward Clarke. The most noticeable thing about Sir Edward's personal appearance was his pair of sweeping side-whiskers. Richardson seized on these, he became a whisker expert, he was never tired of writing about whiskers, at last he could write about nothing else. With Richardson whiskers became a monomania, and if you complained that he used the word ' whiskers ' too frequently, he merely struck it out and substituted ' hirsute appendages.' At last I felt our readers might have too much even of whiskers, and was compelled to stop his contributions. But Frank Richardson went on with the good work : he found a publisher for his *magnum opus*, *The Man with One Whisker*. which duly appeared.

If we could not get a new humorist, we could try to get back some of the old ; and in this we were more successful. Jerome K. Jerome and Israel Zangwill were both exceedingly kind to me, and, partly out of sympathy, partly for the sake of auld lang syne, again became contributors to *To-Day* at considerably under their usual market rates. Though of recent years his name has been much associated with Zionism and serious plays, I think Israel Zangwill was the most brilliant wit I have ever known, as quick in the uptake as even Shaw. Some readers of this book, I hope, will remember Zangwill's essays, ' Without Prejudice,' which he contributed to *To-Day* during my editorship. He was perhaps even wittier as a speaker than as a writer.

Many years later I saw a good deal of Zangwill in connection with the Woman Suffrage movement, of which he, as I myself, was an ardent supporter. I shall never forget the coruscating speech which Zangwill delivered at the Royal Albert Hall to the Women's Social and Political Union, shortly after the suffragettes had had their window-smashing campaign in Whitehall. After explaining how necessary it was to avoid saying anything which could be construed as an incitement to violence, Zangwill concluded :

'Nevertheless I urge you, purely in the *language of metaphor*, to hammer away, spare no pains, leave no stone unturned.'

When told that Haldane had been created a Knight of the Order of the Thistle, Zangwill briefly but ambiguously replied, 'He deserves it!'

One day W. E. Spiers, our assistant advertising-manager, brought me a short story by a young friend of his, a clerk, who had ambitions to become a writer. I read it, liked it, published it, and so gave Alphonse Courlander his start. He had in him the makings of a good novelist—as his *Mightier Than the Sword* proves—but unfortunately he wore himself out with daily journalism and died very young. When I first knew him he was a slim, delicate, but good-looking boy, with charming manners and a favourite with all who knew him.

Ralph Harold Bretherton was another writer whose stories I liked and published frequently. I have never understood why his books have not had more success, for he used to write about children with a rare understanding and individual charm. Why Kenneth Grahame's rather artificial *Golden Age* should have had a great success and Bretherton's equally thoughtful but more simple and natural book, *The Child Mind*, should have attracted little or no notice, is always something of a mystery to me. But Bretherton's book was not well advertised, and the other was.

W. L. Alden, the American humorist, G. B. Burgin, the

original creator of ' The Diary of a Bookseller '—he had many successors—E. Kay Robinson, author of *To-Day with Nature*, whose delightful observations of bird-life I have read and re-read with ever-increasing admiration and profit—these, with Edwin Pugh, were contributors we had inherited from our predecessors. They were ' To-Dayites ' by tradition, and so was Wellesley Pain (brother of Barry Pain) who, under his pen-name ' The Major,' was the author of our page of ' Masculine Modes.' Wellesley Pain was the first journalist to specialise in articles on men's dress and, since tailors had a great respect for him, the advertisement manager always regarded W.P. as our most valuable contributor.

While I was with Wedlake we had bought Horace Annesley Vachell's ' House of Quest '—one of the best purchases of fiction Wedlake ever made—and from him also we inherited Frankfort Moore's ' Castle Omeragh,' a serial of Cromwellian times which was less to my liking.

When I took over the editorship Jerome K. Jerome's ' Paul Kelver ' was running as a serial, and though I believe this to be the best novel Jerome ever wrote, I am sure that the ' Idle Thoughts,' which I afterwards persuaded him to contribute were far more suitable for *To-Day*, and more helpful to our circulation.

Once only did I willingly break my rule to exclude serials in order to secure Arnold Bennett's ' Hugo,' one of his most amusing fantasias, based on a kind of nightmare of Harrods. This only cost us three guineas per thousand words, whereas now an editor would think himself lucky to get the serial rights of a story by Arnold Bennett for fifty guineas a thousand.

But the remuneration of novelists is far higher now than it was twenty years ago. In 1902-3 the two most costly authors were Kipling and W. W. Jacobs, and the serial rights of their stories could be got then for twenty guineas a thousand. Prices like these soared high above the modest maximum for contributions allowed us by the directors, and

for the most part we had to rely on finding new writers to maintain the literary reputation of *To-Day*.

Unquestionably the most brilliant writer we had the good luck to bring to light was Robert Lynd, now literary-editor of the *Daily News*. Black and I got to know an Irish artist named Paul Henry, who came from Belfast, and through him we became acquainted with a number of gifted young men all of whom came from the same city ; George Morrow—subsequently of *Punch* fame—and his three artist brothers, Walter Riddall, who afterwards joined our staff as sub-editor, and Robert W. Lynd.

Lynd and Henry were the greatest friends and lived together at that time. As soon as we read Lynd's first article we knew that we had found a treasure, and we had the satisfaction of knowing that no other editor in London knew anything about him, and that Lynd was far too easy-going and indolent to bother about contributing to other journals as long as *To-Day* could provide him with the bare necessities of existence. Lynd indisputably belongs to the order of men who have greatness thrust upon them. He would never go out to acquire it—not even in the evening-pumps which he used to shock me by wearing in Bond Street sometimes when we visited art-exhibitions together.

Since his marriage Lynd has become more regular and methodical in his habits, but in those days it was trouble enough to get him to write even for *To-Day*. We gave him the utmost liberty, all we demanded was that he should let us have each week one essay about any subject that he liked. The understanding was that he should deliver this essay not later than noon on Thursday. We never got it on Thursday, and that night we would send him a reminder by postcard. When it did not arrive on Friday we would send an urgent wire. Saturday morning Lynd would look in and explain, with an adorable smile that melted all wrath, that he had really started that essay and would let us have it first thing Monday morning. We groaned, and Lynd would explain

how it was that, just this once, he had been unable to make a start earlier. About eleven o'clock on Monday morning, when we were in a state of fury because the essay had not come by the post, the door would open, Lynd would sidle in, and diving into his pocket he would sheepishly produce the long-expected essay.

It was useless to curse him, he only smiled benevolently, and the explosion ended in mutual laughter. He was an unmitigated nuisance, he held us up, he delayed the routine of the office, he upset our 'make-up'—but he was a dear good fellow and his 'copy' was well worth all the trouble it cost to obtain. At first he only signed with his initials, but his essays soon attracted the attention of those qualified to judge. He had only been contributing a few months when Zangwill, with whom I was having tea in his chambers at the Temple, said, 'Who is this R. W. L. you have got? You know he is a born essayist, with a most delightful style.'

Later on, when Lynd signed his articles with his full name, we gave his essays a standing heading, 'The Passing Show,' which since then has been adopted as the title of a popular weekly paper.

About the genius of Lynd, Black and I were unanimous. It was almost the only thing that we were thoroughly agreed upon. Otherwise our policies were poles apart. Black believed in serials: I did not. I thought love stories should be reduced to a minimum: Black thought they should be increased to a maximum. Black was ready to give the public anything it wanted if we could afford it: I obstinately adhered to the opinion that an editor's duty was to direct taste, not to follow meekly that of the majority. Periodically we had violent and heated arguments, often culminating in a fierce dissension on Monday as the paper was going to press; but all this never interfered with our being capital friends throughout, and after our dissension, and when the last proof of the last page had been passed for press, we usually left the printing-works together, had

dinner at the old Simpson's, and spent an entirely amicable evening in each other's company.

It was not only about the conduct of the journal, but about writing generally that our views were diametrically opposed. To Black writing was one way of earning a living, and his real life was outside literature altogether. My life was bound up in literature and art, and I felt that the only justification for writing was a sincere belief that one had something to say which it was expedient or desirable for mankind to hear. Black was entirely without vanity in his own work: I was full of conceit and cherished the illusion that some day I might write a book that would outlive me.

I have said that I was not a model editor, and with my views it was perhaps just as well for the proprietors that I had Black beside me to moderate my missionary zeal. Yet in the most unpopular thing we ever did, and the thing which damaged our circulation most, Black was with me heart and soul.

# IX

## THE END OF 'TO-DAY'

If it be terrible to think how quickly the fury of a mob can be aroused, it is a consolation to reflect how soon the fury dies away and is forgotten. I suppose there is hardly a living man in Great Britain to-day who bears the slightest ill-will to Arthur Lynch, yet about twenty years ago there were nearly forty millions screaming for his blood.

Lynch was an Australian by birth and a republican by conviction; he was also a poet and a man of science. During the nineties, when he was in London, he was one of the original members of the famous Rhymsters' Club; later, in Paris, he was a well-known figure in the Latin Quarter and an associate of Maud Gonne and other Irish patriots. I never met him in the Quarter, but I heard of him; I knew men who had known him there and gathered that he was that most dangerous type, a visionary who is also a man of action, an energetic dreamer. From Paris Lynch went to South Africa and was in Pretoria when the Boer War broke out. His sympathies were entirely with the Republic and against the Empire; the Boers had treated him well and were his friends; his chivalrous, poetic soul inevitably urged him to take the side of the small boy against the big boy; he threw in his lot with his friends, joined their army and became a colonel in their artillery.

Everybody knows the sequel. Colonel Lynch and his friends were defeated, and Arthur Lynch returned to Paris. An enthusiastic Irish constituency promptly elected him;

under the old Nationalist régime any man who had fought against England could be found a safe seat in Parliament. Well knowing that he was risking his life for a second time, Lynch, whose courage even his enemies had to admit, left Paris and came to London to take his seat in Parliament. He was promptly arrested and tried for high treason. 'Hang him! Hang him!' screamed the mob and the majority of the newspapers.

To me this cry was utterly repulsive and deplorable. No man can do more than risk his life for his opinions; when he has done that, when his side has been defeated, when he has escaped death by a miracle, then it seemed to me to be the height of barbarity to desire to slay him. To kill him in hot blood on the field of battle, that is quite another matter; but to put him to death with legal pomp months and months after your victory over his opinions has been proclaimed and established, that appeared to me to be an act of unthinking brutality worthy to be coupled with the horrors of the Counter-Reformation. In times of war trials for high treason may be an unavoidable necessity; in times of peace twentieth-century civilization cannot tolerate the cold-blooded infliction of the death penalty on a man of good character, whose only offence has been the sincere and logical putting into practice of opinions—opinions, which, in theory, all are permitted to entertain.

Black—a Liberal in politics, which I was not—held similar views, though possibly not for quite the same reasons. With a united staff *To-Day* rushed in to defend Colonel Lynch. We protested at the very idea of the death penalty. When that sentence was changed to imprisonment for life, we moved heaven and earth to get the sentence reduced.

As everybody knows, Arthur Lynch was released after serving two years' imprisonment, and one of his first acts when he was a free man was to call at the *To-Day* office and thank us for the way in which we had stood up for him. I liked him at once and soon discovered that, like many other 'bonny fighters,' he was the kindest and most tender-

hearted of creatures, a man of whom it is said that 'he would not hurt a fly.' Nor would he, but if a lion tried to curtail the liberty of the fly, then your tender-hearted visionary will recklessly charge at the lion with the determination of a mastiff.

Ever since that time Arthur Lynch has been my very good friend, and people no longer look scandalised when I proclaim him to be 'one of the best.' During the early part of the European War, just as he was off to Ireland to raise another regiment—he was a magnificent recruiting officer—I met Lynch in London when I was with a Conservative friend who also knew him. Our Tory began chaffing him—'Ha! ha! Lynch, you've changed, you're on *our* side now.'

'Not at all,' replied Lynch calmly; 'it is *you* who have changed. I'm just the same as ever; only now I am supporting the *French* Republic against *German* Imperialism.'

After his release from prison, Lynch contributed several articles to *To-Day*; but, interesting and non-political as these were, I cannot persuade myself that they won back the numerous readers we had lost during the period when we were leading counsels for his defence.

Truth is truth, and there is no disguising the fact that in 1904 the financial position of *To-Day* was bad. It had been rolling down hill for a number of years and had acquired a momentum which it was exceedingly difficult to check. Our actual circulation was certainly no worse in 1904 than it had been in 1901, but it appeared to be worse because we had succeeded in increasing the sales considerably during 1902-3. But the most serious matter was the fall in our revenue from advertisements, and some ill-advised changes in the advertising staff made matters worse instead of better.

*To-Day* had been losing money when I took over the editorship, for a brief time I had made it pay, but now it was a losing property again. We were suffering from a more severe competition than *To-Day* had ever had in the past. We had always been a two-penny paper, and now

new penny papers were cutting into our market. *T.P.'s Weekly* hit us badly, *London Opinion* caught a number of our readers with its lighter note.

The Board of Directors took a serious view of the situation. Something had got to be done. But what? There were two opinions: mine and the rest. Black said, 'Reduce the price to a penny and make the paper more popular.' 'That's all very well,' said I, 'but you know in that case you'll have to treat it like a new paper and spend money like water on advertising it if you're to have a chance of succeeding. And our Board will never do that.'

'Well, what do you propose?' said Black.

'If we're losing money by selling the paper for twopence, I don't believe we are going to make any by selling it for a penny,' I said. 'Don't make it worse, make it better and people won't mind paying threepence for it. That's my plan: strengthen the contributions and raise the price to threepence.'

'Threepenny papers never pay,' growled Black.

'*Punch*,' I retorted.

'Oh, that's different.'

'Well, we can be different too.'

But neither of us could persuade the other. In no sanguine mood I took Black along with me to the next Board meeting. I put both our views before the meeting and I laid great stress on my conviction, that if the price were reduced to a penny it would be imperative to start a vigorous advertising campaign if *To-Day* was to make any headway against its numerous rivals. I summarized briefly what other weeklies were doing and spending on advertising. We had a long discussion, and finally the directors came to a decision and passed two resolutions:

1. Resolved that on and from the —th proximo the price of *To-Day* be reduced to One Penny.
2. Resolved that the sum of one hundred pounds be spent on advertising the reduction in price.

I was not annoyed or angry. I just felt sick and tired.

'Mr. Schmidt,' said I wearily, 'the best thing you can do is to send a letter to *The Times*, stating that at noon on Tuesday next you will throw a hundred pound note into the Thames from Waterloo Bridge.'

'What do you mean?' said he.

'I mean that there is no other way of getting so much publicity with that amount of money.

'Ask any advertising man what can be done with your hundred pounds,' I continued; 'nothing, absolutely nothing. Anybody will tell you that. You might just as well save the money and spend nothing at all. I don't believe in this penny policy, and therefore I'm not the man to carry it out. My friend Black thinks differently, as you know, though I'm sure he'll agree with me that you must spend more on advertising. It will be best for all of us if you will accept my resignation, and I suggest that from the date you mention Mr. Black be appointed Managing Editor.'

So then they added two more resolutions to the minutes, one accepting my resignation, and another appointing Black as my successor. They were very nice about it, and said they hoped I would remain a contributor. This, of course, I was pleased to do as long as the paper lasted. But it didn't last long. Within the twelvemonth *To-Day* collapsed, was sold for a mere song, and the title merged in *London Opinion*.

# X

## I BECOME AN ART CRITIC

When I began to write I had two ambitions, neither of which has as yet been fulfilled: one was to be a novelist, the other was to establish myself as a dramatic critic. Before I joined the staff of *To-Day* I had for some time been contributing dramatic criticisms regularly to a suburban newspaper, *The Balham and Tooting Weekly Post*, and when I returned to *To-Day* as editor I assumed the dramatic criticism of that journal as one of my minor jobs, writing 'Letters of a Candid Playgoer' under the pen-name of 'Phil Istine.'

My early experiments in fiction never went further than the production of a 'shilling shocker,' written in collaboration with Ladbroke Black, and the publication of a small volume of undergraduate stories and dialogues, *'Varsity Types*, originally issued in 1902 by Everett and afterwards taken over by Messrs. Heffer & Sons of Cambridge, in whose capable and considerate hands it went on selling for over twenty years.

During Wedlake's editorship my miscellaneous work for *The Sunday Special*, in addition to special articles and a little book reviewing, had included the writing of paragraphs of theatrical gossip for the 'Plays and Players' column, and an occasional criticism when our dramatic critic, J. T. Grein, was otherwise engaged. But after Wedlake left in 1901 the contributions to *The Sunday Special* were completely reorganized by Leonard Rees, the literary and dramatic

columns were placed in expert hands, and my participation in these features was at an end.

Rees, however, very kindly wanted to find me a job on the paper. One day he said to me, ' You're interested in pictures, aren't you ? ' I confessed that I was, and he then explained to me that there was a vacancy for an art critic ; he concluded by asking me if I would in future write the art criticisms for the *Special*. Of course I jumped at the opportunity, and so began my association with Leonard Rees as art critic for his journal, an association which has now lasted for over twenty-five years.

I remember that the first exhibition I visited professionally was a one-man show of water colours by the late A. W. Rich, held during the spring of 1901 in the old Dudley Gallery, at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly. I went there in considerable trepidation on the Press Day and gazed with awe at the exhibits, wondering what on earth I was to write about these wonderful water colours. Suddenly I perceived in the Gallery a journalist with whom I had some slight acquaintance. He was not an art critic, but a highly competent reporter, an ' old hand ' capable of turning out good ' copy ' about anything. I went up to him shyly, and quite unnecessarily informed him that this was the first picture exhibition I had been sent to write about, and I asked him if he did not think art criticism was frightfully difficult.

' Oh no,' he replied smiling, ' this is quite simple. You see,' he explained, ' the prices are printed in the catalogue.'

I did not quite see how this helped.

' Well,' he continued, ' it stands to reason that the artist has put the highest prices on what he considers to be his best things. Look at the prices : you can see for yourself how they vary. All you have got to do is to say that this is a collection of unequal merit, pick out some of the highest priced ones as being the best and let yourself go over them, and then mention one or two of the cheapest as examples in which the artist is not quite so successful. Like that you can't go wrong, and there you are.'

I thanked him, but could not persuade myself that I was 'there.' The matter seemed to be more subtle and difficult, and in the end I did not write my first notice on the lines he had suggested. Even then I had an uneasy feeling that an artist was not the best judge of his own work, and I found myself liking some of the cheaper water colours better than more highly priced exhibits. On that occasion it was sheer obstinacy that led me to set up my own uninformed opinion against the figures in the catalogue, but since then I have discovered why prices are so treacherous a guide to the real value of any work of art.

A painter is always inclined to put the highest price on the picture that has given him most trouble, and the picture that has given him most trouble is very unlikely to be his most successful work. The best are almost invariably those which have come easily, which have 'arrived,' so to speak, of themselves. The one great advantage I have enjoyed as a critic has been that I have always looked upon works of art from the viewpoint of a consumer, not that of a rival producer. Never at any time have I had the slightest ambition to become an artist, to draw or paint myself, and if I have from time to time maltreated pigment my practice has been purely experimental, to gain certain technical knowledge and see what happens to colours and materials.

Since Rees had seen fit to make me an art critic, the least I could do was to take the job seriously and endeavour to equip myself properly for the work I had undertaken. From the easy-going condition of knowing what I liked, I now had to turn and ask myself sternly *why* did I like some pictures and not others, and at the same time I had to search for general principles by which I could check and correct my own personal predilections.

It was my privilege to conduct my art education in public, and week by week my printed criticisms betrayed just how far I had got. Fortunately, I was never hampered by a fear of being inconsistent, and did not worry myself with any thought as to whether what I was now writing clashed

with something I had written in the past. Each week I said just what I thought and believed at the time, and no writer can do more.

I did not find the work easy, but I found it extraordinarily fascinating, and there is just one thing I must set down for what it is worth. The years I spent in seeing plays and writing about them did not really increase my interest in the drama. I had to sit through so many bad plays that my interest in the stage gradually waned, and after I had definitely abandoned dramatic criticism, for many years—though I still read plays in book-form—I had little desire to enter any theatre. My professional experience had deadened my liking for the drama.

But though each week it has been my duty to inspect a large number of feeble, mediocre and ineffective pictures, I have found that my interest in drawing and painting has continually increased. I cannot explain this difference. The solution of the problem is perhaps to be found only in the personal equation. I enjoy going to a theatre now, when it is the right sort of play, but I am convinced that, in comparison with pictorial and plastic art, the art of the theatre is more easily exhausted and is less lasting in its appeal to the intellect and the imagination.

Be it observed, I speak here only of the theatrical spectacle, not of the drama as literature. That is another matter altogether.

Last winter I spent a very enjoyable evening in the hospitable home of Douglas Murray, author of ' The Man from Toronto.' After dinner the talk drifted into comparisons between art and literature, and our host, a staunch champion of literature, proceeded to put painting in its place. ' Where are the pictures,' he asked, ' which you could put beside the plays of Shakespeare ? What painting can bear comparison with " Hamlet " ? '

Two painters were present, but neither appeared anxious to take up the challenge. No doubt they suspected that they were in danger of having their legs pulled, and for some

time they remained silent. Then one of them bestirred himself and began to grumble that these comparisons were not fair.

'No, no,' I protested, 'all comparisons are fair, though some may be inapt and not very helpful. But this time we must make an effort. Well,' I said at last, 'if it comes to stamping a conception indelibly on the imagination of the world, what about Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper"? I fancy that, in its own way, can bear comparison even with "Hamlet".' Douglas Murray thought it over and frankly admitted that it could.

Thus encouraged I proceeded, 'Again, Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne," I think we could fairly set that up beside "Antony and Cleopatra".'

Once more Murray murmured assent, and there was another long pause.

'I'm not sure,' I began slowly, 'if it comes to rollicking humour and acute characterisation, that Pieter Brueghel's "Adoration of the Kings" in the National Gallery isn't a finer achievement than "The Merry Wives of Windsor." There's a good deal of Falstaff in Brueghel's painting, isn't there?'

'Yes,' said Murray, 'that's all right. But,' he added with a twinkle, 'it's not very easy to find them, is it?'

It was true. One had to rack one's brains pretty hard to find paintings comparable to the plays of Shakespeare. So I evaded the real difficulty by retorting feebly, 'Well, there's only one Shakespeare.'

No doubt many people will be inclined to agree with the two painters present, and say that these comparisons are not really very helpful, and that arguments of this kind never lead anywhere. But I am not so sure. It is true that there is not much good to be got directly out of comparing things unalike—a painting with a play, or a poem with a piece of music—but all the same indirectly these futile arguments are often stimulating and illuminating. Take any series of plays by Shakespeare and endeavour to match them in pictorial

art, the result is not likely to change your opinion about the plays or the pictures selected, but it must infallibly assist you to establish the *rank* of those particular pictures in the hierarchy of art.

Personally I believe that it is only by a continual process of comparison that we ever learn to distinguish the better from the worse, and for this purpose all comparisons are helpful, even the most inapt often assisting us in a surprising manner to clarify our own ideas and formulate a little more precisely that classification which is, certainly not the end, but just as certainly the beginning of all sound criticism.

But I must return to my own first steps in the criticism of pictures. I should be ungrateful, indeed, if I omitted to mention here my indebtedness to those who helped me to increase my understanding of art. During these early days I derived great help at home from talking things over with my sister, who had been an art-student. I owe much also to the Scottish artist, Archibald S. Forrest, who for several years regularly contributed illustrations to *To-Day*. With Forrest I visited the National Gallery, the Wallace Collection, and other places where pictures could be seen, and his remarks and arguments were invaluable in setting my feet firmly on the right road.

It was Forrest who introduced me to Lucien Pissarro, that exquisite landscape-painter from whom I have learnt almost all that I know about the science of colour. To Lucien I can never be sufficiently grateful; he was the first great painter who admitted me to his friendship.

I attended the lectures given by Mr. George Clausen at the Royal Academy, and those given by Mr. D. S. MacColl to the Slade students at University College, Gower Street, and I owe much to them, particularly to Mr. MacColl, who was most kind and helpful to me when I was a novice in the profession of which he had long been a conspicuous ornament. In addition to haunting galleries where I could study the Old Masters and my attendance at lectures on art,

I read up the subject in books and mastered the rudiments of the history of painting.

Alas ! it is a humiliating admission for a writer of art-books to make, but if I am to be perfectly truthful I must confess that I have learnt far more from paintings and painters than I have from any books about them. The truth is that there are no words in the English, or any other, language that can convey to a reader the precise hue and texture of a patch of colour in any picture, or the exact effect produced by a pattern of line in an etching or wood-engraving. All that books can do is to send us to look at the thing itself, and by some apt analogy or happy suggestion contrive to make us see in the work certain qualities and beauties which we might otherwise overlook.

I do not wish to underestimate what I have learnt from other writers, I have learnt much from books, particularly from Fromentin's *Les Maîtres d'Autrefois*, and *Velasquez* by R. A. M. Stevenson, two of the most illuminating books on art ever written ; but to the youthful critic books are apt to be a danger because he is inclined out of respect for authority to swallow them whole and accept their conclusions too readily.

Like most young critics I began my study of art with an overweening respect for technique. I had grown up among a generation of artists whose watchword was ' Art for Art's Sake,' and this disposition to consider the doing of a thing as more important than the thing done was encouraged and confirmed by the writings of R. A. M. Stevenson. For years I accepted his dictum, *Technique is Art*, as the last word in criticism, and after the manner of the nineties I sniffed contemptuously at the moral arguments of Ruskin.

Yet I have lived to discover that of the two Ruskin is the safer guide. In his voluminous writings, his *Modern Painters* and *Stones of Venice*, are many precious truths of criticism, only, oh dear ! those precious truths, so beautifully expressed, are swathed and wrapped up in a mass of often irrelevant and distracting verbiage, so that to find them

is like looking for needles in a haystack. Further, for a beginner it is by no means easy to identify the needles when found, for some of his assertions are as demonstrably false as others are incontrovertibly true. Nobody is really fit to read Ruskin or able to derive great benefit from his writings till he has had something approaching to Ruskin's own experience of pictures. For it is experience that teaches us to sift the wheat from the chaff.

All the painters I knew at this time—except Lucien Pissarro, with whom I had not yet become intimate—encouraged me to think that R. A. M. Stevenson was right and Ruskin wrong. All were careful to point out to me the importance of technique, to assert again and again that technique was 'it.' Though I learnt a great deal about the science of painting from Stevenson's book, I hold that he hampered my understanding of what art really is. It was years before I broke free from his erudite eloquence and discovered for myself that Technique is not art but Craftsmanship, is not the end of art but a means to the end, which is Expression. In this business of freeing myself from Stevenson's influence, the books of the German critic, Julius Meier-Graeffe, were a valuable help.

When I became absorbed in impressionist painting and gave myself furiously to the study of 'luminism,' to the investigation of theories of complementary colour, 'optical mixture,' and other aspects of the influence of optics and spectroscopic analysis on painting, it was Lucien Pissarro, who knew more about the subject than any man I have ever met, who became mildly distressed at my preoccupation with this scientific side of painting. He would remonstrate gently, and point out to me that the real beauty in the paintings of his father Camille Pissarro resided not so much in their scientific accuracy as in their *harmony* of colour.

It was Lucien Pissarro, again, who one day when I was expatiating foolishly on the brilliant technique of some Old Master, broke in quietly, 'Yes, yes, but what is so difficult

is not to paint as the Old Masters painted, it is to *feel* as the Old Masters felt.'

All the time, then, that I was giving my first attention to the editing of *To-Day*, the study of art became more and more my own particular and private hobby. I prosecuted my studies during every spare moment that I had in London, and when I could get away for a holiday I usually spent it on the Continent, studying pictures at Paris and elsewhere.

In Paris two men I had known at Cambridge, Stephen Haweis and Gerald Kelly, were then studying art, and through them I got to know others in addition to the artists I already knew through Moyle Cooper and the American Art Association. Thus even in those early days I was tolerably alive to what was being thought and done in Paris as well as London. In 1903 the proprietors of *The Sunday Special* bought the *Sunday Times*, and the two papers were amalgamated under the title of the latter and older journal. Thus automatically I became art critic to the *Sunday Times*, of which Rees was now editor.

After I had resigned the editorship of *To-Day* in 1904, I was free to give practically my whole time to the study of art, and for the next ten years I made it a rule to spend at least two or three months in Paris annually, and so keep in touch with the latest developments of painting there. My enthusiasm for impressionist painting reached its climax in 1905 when the veteran dealer, M. Durand-Ruel, came to London and exhibited a wonderful collection of paintings by Boudin, Degas, Manet, Monet, Pissarro, Renoir and Sisley at the Grafton Galleries.

It is difficult now for anybody to realise that this exhibition excited as much controversy and heated argument as the Post-Impressionist exhibitions did in the same galleries ten years later. But the Royal Academy was very different twenty years ago from what it is to-day, and under the presidency of Sir E. J. Poynter it resolutely set its face against all modern forms of painting.

The duel which raged between it and the New English Art Club for the control of our national art institutions had not yet been decided in favour of the latter, though already the prestige of the Academy had been lowered in London by its maladministration of the Chantrey Bequest. This had already been the subject of an enquiry in the House of Lords, and week after week Mr. D. S. MacColl made deadly onslaughts on the policy of the Academy in the columns of *The Saturday Review*. His lead was followed by the majority of London art-critics, so that that portion of the Press which gave serious attention to art was definitely hostile to the Royal Academy. Nevertheless the Academy was in a strong position, it was still able to use the Tate Gallery as a dumping ground for pictures by mediocrities, and it still controlled the National Gallery of which Sir E. J. Poynter was Director. Not only was modern French painting wholly unrepresented at Trafalgar Square, but the authorities then would not accept an example of impressionist painting even as a gift. About this time a fine painting by Degas was offered to the National Gallery, but the gift had been definitely rejected by the Trustees and Director.

The Durand-Ruel exhibition at the Grafton Galleries seemed to present an admirable opportunity for repairing this woeful gap in our national art collection, and I seized every opportunity of insisting on the supreme merit of this school of painters and on the desirability of securing some pictures by these masters for the nation.

Naturally my efforts in this direction met with considerable opposition. I very nearly persuaded one lady of my acquaintance to buy a painting by Monet and give it to the nation, but unfortunately she distrusted my youthful judgment,and before acting sought to have my opinion confirmed by a well-known landscape painter of age and experience. So she persuaded a veteran Academician to accompany her to the Grafton Galleries. The great man looked round the walls in a patronising manner and then observed loftily, 'But you know, my dear lady, these are merely sketches.

We all of us have sketches like these in our studios, but we should never dream of exhibiting them.'

After that I was informed that the pictures were 'too unfinished' to be worthy of a place in the National Gallery.

Having failed with an individual collector, my next idea was to raise a sum of money by subscriptions for the purchase of one or more impressionist paintings. I mentioned my idea to Rees, who at first was a little doubtful about my project, but eventually he and the proprietors very kindly allowed me to open a subscription list in the *Sunday Times*. So the 'French Impressionist Fund' was started. Mr. D. S. MacColl and Sir Claude Phillips, then Keeper of the Wallace Collection, were good enough to join me on the Executive Committee, and one of the first to send us a cheque for ten guineas was John Singer Sargent, R.A. Another early subscriber was the famous dealer, Mr. Asher Wertheimer.

M. Benoit, the caterer, to whom the Grafton Galleries then belonged, offered to lend us the galleries on nominal terms for a Sunday evening, and with a view to raising more money for the Fund I rashly undertook to give a lecture on 'Impressionism: the Poetry of Painting.' I had never before attempted to give a lecture, and I was terribly nervous when the night arrived. Sir John Lavery, who kindly took the chair for me, nearly had to drag me on the platform when the time came. Mr. Cunninghame Graham also supported me, and at the end of the lecture made a delightful little speech which rewarded the audience for its attendance.

One little incident of that evening is perhaps worth recalling. I had got well started, and, warming to my task, was telling the audience exactly what I thought of the Royal Academy, and its antediluvian hostility to the most important movement in contemporary painting, when I heard a mild commotion at the end of the hall. I saw an elderly bearded gentleman glaring at me with indignation and then watched him stump angrily out of the building.

Later on I was informed that the Dilettante Society had been having a dinner that same evening in their clubroom,

situated immediately under the gallery in which I was lecturing. The elderly gentleman who had been affronted by my remarks on his way out through the gallery, was none other than Sir E. J. Poynter, President of the Royal Academy. The worst of it was that in some quarters, I gather, it was believed that I had identified the passer-by and had deliberately launched at his head this attack on the society over which he presided. Needless to say, I had not the slightest intention to be personal, and no doubt I should have moderated my language had I known that Poynter himself was listening to my remarks.

An enthusiastic supporter of my Fund was Mme. Blanche Marchesi, herself a collector of impressionist paintings, who very generously organised a concert in aid of the Fund on another Sunday evening at the Grafton Galleries. The concert was a great success musically, if not financially. Among the performers were that polished singer and chivalrous gentleman, Gervase Elwes, and George Enesco, the Roumanian composer and violinist. The latter astounded me not only by his masterly violin solos, but also by his powers as a pianist. It had been arranged that the concluding item of the programme was to be Isolde's Death-song from ' Tristan,' but at the last moment Mme. Marchesi's favourite accompanist had disappointed her, and she had not brought the music. What was to be done ?

The problem was being anxiously discussed in the artists' room, when Enesco shyly approached the singer. ' I think I know it, Madame,' he said modestly, ' and if you will trust me I will do my best.' In her impulsive way, Blanche Marchesi nearly embraced him, and at the end of the concert Enesco sat down at the piano and played the wonderful accompaniment brilliantly, entirely from memory.

Money did not pour in, but in two or three weeks' time we had about a hundred and twenty pounds which, with goodwill on the part of the vendor, was enough to buy at least one picture. The question was which, and by whom.

Degas we ruled out, because there was already one painting by him in the Ionides Collection at South Kensington. My personal preference was for Claude Monet's, ' Snow Effect at Vetheuil '—which my friend Sir Hugh P. Lane afterwards purchased—and Durand-Ruel would have let us have this at our own price. We debated the matter lengthily, but there were two arguments against it, firstly, Monet was a living painter and so, strictly speaking, his work was ineligible, and secondly, his art was considered too ' advanced ' to be then acceptable to the authorities. We were all agreed that we did not want to buy a picture, and then have it left on our hands : we wanted to be sure that the picture we purchased should be hung without delay in the National Gallery. Sir Claude Phillips undertook to pull wires diplomatically and ascertain exactly how far the authorities of the National Gallery would let us go. Some days later he reported to us that Boudin was the furthest limit to which the National Gallery was prepared to go for the present. It was really useless for us to think of buying a work by any of the others, because it was a certainty that it would not be accepted.

Greatly as I loved the painting of Boudin I was distinctly disappointed, for neither then nor now do I regard his work as exemplifying what we understand by ' impressionism.' Still he was one of the forerunners, he was an admirable artist, he was not represented in the National Gallery, and if there was nothing else that would be accepted, then by all means let us buy a Boudin. Next it had to be considered what painting by Boudin should be purchased.

At this stage MacColl made an admirable suggestion. Naturally there were evilly-disposed persons who whispered that I was ' hand-in-glove ' with the dealer, and that all my agitation was merely a ruse to sell one of Durand-Ruel's ' worthless ' pictures. We could afford to ignore this malicious gossip ; nevertheless, since our one desire was to obtain the best possible painting our scanty means permitted, there was no reason why we should *not* look beyond M.

Durand-Ruel's collection and a certain advantage in proving our disinterestedness by making the purchase elsewhere.

MacColl told us that at Havre there was a gentleman, M. P. Van der Veldt, who had an admirable collection of Boudins. He had known the painter personally and had bought all these pictures direct from the artist. MacColl believed that M. Van der Veldt would be willing to let one of his Boudins go to the National Gallery for such a sum as we could afford. Sir Claude Phillips also approved of this idea.

'Well,' said I, 'will you or Sir Claude go to Havre then, and see this collection and endeavour to buy one of his Boudins?'

'No,' said MacColl, 'that is quite unnecessary. This is your affair. You raised the Fund and you are the proper person to make the final selection. I will give you an introduction to M. Van der Veldt, and I am sure we shall both be perfectly satisfied with your choice.' Sir Claude agreed, and so it was arranged. In the autumn I went over to Havre, presented my introduction to M. Van der Veldt, and spent two anxious days studying his numerous examples of Boudin. Finally I decided on 'The Harbour of Trouville,' which the owner allowed us to have for the sum at our disposal.

I brought the picture over myself as passenger's luggage, and at MacColl's earnest request handed it over to the National Art Collections Fund for presentation to the National Gallery, which accepted it officially early in 1906. This method of approach was no doubt diplomatic, but I have sometines thought since that it was not altogether fair to the original body of subscribers to let their generosity go unacknowledged. As a matter of history it ought to be recorded that this picture in the National Gallery was 'presented *through* the National Art Collections Fund *by* the French Impressionist Fund.'

The purchase of this Boudin was the most memorable of many pleasant incidents which marked my visit to France

in the autumn of 1905. After I had concluded my business with M. Van der Veldt and arranged to collect the picture on my way back from Paris, I joined my friend Hanslip Fletcher, who was already at Havre. Before we left London, we had persuaded Mr. John Lane to undertake the publication of a travel book which Fletcher was to illustrate and I to write. We both brought our bicycles over with us, and we spent a delightful three weeks or so slowly riding along the banks of the Seine from Le Havre to Paris, stopping at Caudebec, Jumièges, Rouen, Les Andelys, Vernon and other places.

Since the main incidents of our journey have already been recorded in our book, *The Path to Paris*, I will not repeat them here, but there are one or two things unmentioned in it to which I may now briefly allude.

One was my visit to Boudin's brother, Louis Boudin, author and playwright, who was then living at Ignauval, near Le Havre. The dear old man was delighted to hear that one of his brother's paintings was to be hung in the National Gallery, London, and he showed me a number of drawings and sketches which he still possessed. He also presented me on my departure with printed copies of two of his own plays, severely classical, poetic dramas after the manner of Racine. I am afraid he thought me rather a wonderful person, and imagined that since I was getting one of his brother's pictures into the National Gallery, I could easily get one of his plays produced in London.

Of my visit to Claude Monet at Giverny, while we were staying in Vernon, only the briefest mention is made in *The Path to Paris*. Mr. Durand-Ruel senior had given me an introduction to the painter, but had warned me that Monet would not consent to be 'interviewed,' and that I was to regard my call as a private visit. I respected Monet's wish, but after all these years, I hope it will not be considered a breach of confidence if I set down here some of the things he then said to me.

My memory of Monet is of a short, thick-set man in a

pepper-and-salt suit with very clear light-blue eyes. The first thing I saw in his studio was a framed photograph of Hogarth's 'Shrimp Girl,' which I learnt was a special favourite with the painter.

'Ah! Hogarth! He is your great man,' said Monet and he began to explain why he thought Hogarth to be a greater painter than either Reynolds or Gainsborough, an opinion with which I agree even more strongly now than I did then. It was not only the impressionism of 'The Shrimp Girl' which appealed to him, it was the general breadth and power of Hogarth's painting, his manipulation of pigment, his power of drama and design. He spoke also of Turner, but was careful to impress on me that it was Turner's later pictures, not his earlier, that were the special objects of his admiration.

He was pleased to learn that his old master Boudin was to be represented in the National Gallery, and indulging in reminiscence he confided to me, with a chuckle, 'Ah, Boudin, you know, thought I was going too far. He did not altogether like my later work.'

He paused, and then went on, 'And now I—I think others go too far.' His eyes twinkled, he shrugged his shoulders. 'It is the way of the world,' he concluded. I wanted to press him for particulars, but he would not be drawn. I gathered, however, that at that time he felt that Signac and the neo-impressionists had gone too far.

Then I asked him straight out what he thought of Cézanne. He looked at me very hard.

'Cézanne,' he said slowly, 'Cézanne was the strongest of us all.' I tried to get him to say more, but he only repeated his phrase, *le plus fort de nous tous*, and then changed the subject by asking me about my journey. An ardent lover of the Seine, he took a keen interest in my wanderings by its banks and gave me good counsel for the next stage of our journey.

'When you leave Vernon,' said he, 'do not take the main road on the left bank, but cross over the bridge and

follow the river on this side, through Gasny, La Roche Guyon, and Vetheuil. Do not miss Vetheuil on any account; I am sure that will please you. It is, of course, further to Mantes this way than by the other road, but I am sure you will not regret the longer journey. Ah, my dear Monsieur, truly I am inclined to envy you your promenade. You will pass some charming places, places I know very well, places in which I used to live. But what would you? I have been pushed further and further down the river to escape the people who would hinder me with my work.'

Then he told me how when he lived nearer to Paris he was constantly pestered by people who had no claim on him whatever. Other painters, both men and women, would boldly set up their easels beside his own and endeavour to scrape an acquaintance. 'They would follow me about for days together. I could not get rid of them. Where I went, they went. What I painted, they would paint also. They would make me look at their work and then when, not to be impolite, I had said two or three words, they would go away and tell the world that they were pupils of Monet.' He fumed with indignation and told me the names of one or two painters who had so afflicted him. 'Oblige me, Monsieur, by remembering that I, Monet, have never had a pupil; and you may tell that to whom you please.'

'Now,' he concluded almost mournfully, 'I paint chiefly in my garden, there at least I am undisturbed. You must come and see it.' So before I left he took me round his walled-in garden and I saw the rustic bridge and the water-lilies which have appeared in so many of his paintings.

Both Fletcher and I were grateful to Monet for his directions when we resumed our journey. Past Giverny the high road commands extensive views of the Seine; and, of the many magnificent pictorial subjects which abound on this beautiful river, I do not know one to surpass the full view of the Seine beyond Gasny with the suspension bridge of Roche Guyon and the twelfth century donjon delicately

poised on the side of the hill. To travel along the banks of the Seine is almost a necessary preliminary to a right understanding of much French painting, for here some of France's greatest landscape painters found material for their pictures. As we cycled along from Havre, in sunlight and sometimes in moonlight, there was unfolded before us like a panorama a sequence of visions great painters had recorded. There from day to day we saw in nature not only Monets, Sisley and Pissarros, but Corots, Daubignies, Duprés and Pointelins.

It was a delightful tour, full of instruction and happy memories, and with it will always be associated in my thoughts the Russian sculptor, Naoum Aronson, who, at the end of the trip welcomed us both to his hospitable studio in the Rue de Vaugirard. I owe much to Aronson, who was one of my earliest friends in Paris, for his patient exposition of the qualities of his own art, sculpture, Both by precept at the Louvre before masterpieces by Michael Angelo and others, and by practical demonstrations in his own studio, Aronson was indefatigable in enlightening my ignorance and in opening my eyes to those subtleties of modelling which count for so much in plastic art.

It was at Aronson's studio another year that I was a guest at one of the most interesting dinner-parties I have ever attended. There were only eight of us, all men, but we were all of different nationalities. At least, I do not think any Scotsman would admit that he was of the same nationality as an Englishman. There were then our host, a Russian, J. D. Fergusson, whose nationality is obvious, two other painters, one French and the other Belgian, the Polish journalist Danilowicz, a delightful German doctor, very musical who played both piano and violin with equal skill, a Czech writer from Prague and myself. I wish I could remember the name of the Czech, for he was a brilliant talker with an astonishing knowledge of modern English literature. Particularly I remember being as surprised as I was pleased to find that he was a tremendous admirer of

Arthur Machen, whom I have met once or twice and always found as charming in his manner as his books are beautiful in style. To-day the author of *The Great God Pan* has a tolerably wide circle of readers, but twenty years ago it showed a remarkable discernment in a foreign critic to pick out Arthur Machen as our finest stylist in prose and one of our most original and brilliant writers of imaginative romance. It is a shocking comment on literary conditions that after writing books like the one mentioned and *The Three Impostors*, Machen should have been unable to earn an adequate living by his pen. Only a little while before the Czech critic was singing his praises, Machen had been supporting himself by acting. He was a good actor too, as all who saw him as the old Councillor in George Alexander's production of 'Old Heidelberg' will remember.

Somehow I always contrast this cosmopolitan dinner-party at Aronson's with a dreadful dinner in London at which all the guests were British. A friend of mine conceived the appalling idea of inviting a number of critics to meet one another at dinner in his house. The one thing that cheered me up as I went along to the house, was the knowledge that Max Beerbohm was to be one of the guests. I looked forward to hearing a stream of witticism pour from the lips of that brilliant personage, but alas! when Max Beerbohm arrived he settled down to spend the evening in discussing Latin verses with Laurence Binyon. I hope our host, himself a classical scholar, derived enjoyment from their erudite conversation, but for my part I was distinctly disappointed.

Before this, however, my spirits had been damped by the lady whom it was my privilege to take in to dinner. She was a sister scribe who had recently written a book on Italian painting, and we had hardly finished our soup before she turned on me with the fatuous question, 'And what, Mr. Rutter, do *you* think of the Renaissance?'

Desirous of being bright and amusing, I replied lightly, 'Oh, I think of it as little as I possibly can.'

'Indeed,' she said coldly, and turning her back on me she proceeded to engage her other neighbour in serious conversation. I only found out later that she was herself the authoress of a book on the Renaissance that had just been published.

# XI

## EDITORS, DEALERS AND COLLECTORS

SHORTLY before the collapse of *To-Day* I gave up my flat in Gray's Inn and went to live in Rottingdean, where my mother had taken a house. Being now free of all office-work there was nothing to tie me to London, and I found I could do my writing just as well and rather better in the country. Also I felt that I wanted to get away from London as much as possible. I was genuinely distressed at the disappearance of a journal for which I had a real affection, in which for four years I had taken so much pride, and at the same time I was so innocent and inexperienced that I was hurt and pained to discover what a difference it made to many people whether I was or was not an editor. I foolishly imagined that certain writers and illustrators with whom I had been intimate liked me 'for myself,' as the saying is, and it was a horrid shock to find that they began dropping me like a hot coal as soon as I resigned my editorship. I was reluctantly driven to the conclusion that what they really liked were the little jobs I had been able to put in their way, and not yet having arrived at the stage of understanding that 'business is business,' I was plunged in melancholy and inclined to regard friendship as a hollow fraud. I went out less and less, I became more and more of a hermit, and buried myself deeper and deeper in art.

Financially my position was precarious, for now I had no one job that would support me. Once I thought it was my duty to find something 'regular,' and for a few weeks

I was a sub-editor on the *Daily Mirror*. But I had got out of the daily-paper habit, and my work there was unsatisfactory to myself and everybody else. Kenealy, the editor, sacked me in the most polite and tactful manner possible. One evening I was invited into his office, and when I had sat down he said, 'Mr. Rutter, you're an art-critic, aren't you?'

I admitted my guilt.

'Well,' he said gently, 'then you know that there is all the difference in the world between landscape-painting and house-painting?' He paused to let his words sink in, and then continued, 'Now, what we want here is house-painting.'

Could anything have been more charming?

I smiled back at him at once, and said, 'Well, shall I leave at the end of the week?'

'Oh, I don't want to hurry you!' he replied, 'but you know you are not really doing yourself any good here.'

'Then if it suits you, we'll say the end of the week,' I returned; and we shook hands on that with great cordiality.

I accepted my dismissal with equanimity, the more so since a friend of mine, an esteemed contributor to the *Quarterly Review*, received his *congé* from Kenealy during the same week. It flattered me to think I was leaving the *Mirror* in good company, and I resolved that henceforward I would stick to 'landscape-painting' and leave 'house-painting' alone.

Even journalism is sufficiently human to have its limitations. You can aim at writing for *Answers*, or you can aim at writing for the *Edinburgh Review*, but you are hardly likely to be able to write for both with success. The miserable thing about the writing trade is, that the lower the class of the journal the higher is the rate of pay. This is not cynicism, but a sober truth which anybody who knows Fleet Street can confirm. Nor is the explanation hard to find. The journals which make least strain on the intelligence of their readers naturally have the largest circulations. The journals with the largest circulations reap the richest

harvest from advertisements, and consequently they can afford to pay contributors proportionately highly.

During this difficult period I received much kindness from Lord Alfred Douglas, who commissioned me to write occasional articles for *The Academy*, which he was then editing. From my point of view Lord Alfred was an ideal editor, he gave me a perfectly free hand, he was not afraid to print a slashing attack if it was justified, and if there was trouble he would back up his contributor loyally and stoutly. He was at all events an editor who encouraged sincerity and outspokenness.

His was a very different attitude from that taken up by two other editors who gave me regular work. One was a distinguished French critic to whose review, published in Paris, I used to contribute an article in French once a month. The pay was very bad, and Monsieur X. apologised for it, when he appointed me his London Correspondent: 'But,' he whispered confidentially in my ear, 'of course you can keep for yourself all that you get out of the artists!'

Now that was generous, for I have learnt since that there are Parisian editors who expect a heavy percentage on all their contributors make by writing 'puff' paragraphs. But alas! his concession did not increase my income by one halfpenny. Journals in Paris and London are conducted on totally different lines, and from all I know and have ever heard the gentle art of 'touching' somebody is wholly unknown to British critics. Abroad it is different, and nobody seems to think evil of the practice, which has grown up because the Continent generally, instead of buying advertisement space openly, has always preferred to pay for favourable publicity disguised as editorial matter. I do not assert that all French editors and all French critics are venal, but the habit of giving favourable editorial notice for a consideration is so widespread that with the exception of a few periodicals of the highest class nobody takes press criticism seriously in France.

My other editor, an American, was guiltless of suggesting

that I should enrich myself surreptitiously from the pockets of wealthy artists—if they could be found !—because in the United States the English method of buying advertisement space for publicity also prevails ; but he did hope that my tactful attention to certain big dealers would help to persuade them how beneficial it would be to them if they took advertising space in his columns. That was not my job, however, my job was to get ' noos,' as he called it, art news. He was no enthusiast for high-brow criticism, but wanted ' sensible ' articles weekly, articles which would concentrate on the money-value of works of art and state all fluctuations of prices. ' I want you to regard pictures just as you would regard cheese or any other commodity,' he would drawl. ' What are they worth now, what were they worth yesterday, what will they be worth to-morrow ? These are the real important things.' The duty of an art critic, it was explained to me, was to ' watch the market,' to report regularly and promptly on ' rises ' and ' falls.' I had to feel as if I held shares in Corots, and could enter into the feelings of an unhappy investor who saw a slump in the Frederick Goodalls of which he held a long line.

Here was an admirable opportunity to ' bear ' the Academy and ' bull' the French Impressionists. I ought to have taken more advantage of it, but I have never been able to take money-values seriously where works of art are concerned, and I am afraid I looked upon this New York journal and its editor more in the light of a colossal joke than anything else.

I was also expected, of course, to nose out any ' line of goods ' that would be coming into the market shortly, to keep track of important paintings that ' changed hands,' and find out if possible what was for sale before it was sold. My American confidently expected that the leading art-dealers would hasten to give me tidings of all the delicate negotiations they were about to undertake, and when he got to know London a little better he was bitterly disappointed that the ' Big Men ' in Bond Street should be so singularly

blind to all that he and his journal could do for them in the United States. Grieved at their reticence, my editor instructed me to call on the principal dealers, make friends with them, and endeavour to elicit information of interest.

Up to a point I obeyed his instructions, and so got to know several of the ' Big Men ' in Bond Street. I well remember my first interview with the late Asher Wertheimer who informed me, with perfect courtesy, that he had nothing to tell me for publication, but that if I was really interested in art, he would be pleased to show me a few things, only I must promise him not to write about them. Promptly I gave my word, for I could realise—though my American could not—that a dealer engaged in delicate negotiations with persons of high social position, would not long retain the confidence and esteem of his clients if he blabbed out what they were going to sell him or had just sold him to the first journalist that came his way.

When Mr. Wertheimer found that I could be trusted not to blab, he expanded and became much more communicative, showing me a number of precious things which otherwise I should have had no chance of seeing. What I admired so much about Asher Wertheimer was that he was never a worshipper of mere names, it was ' quality ' in the painting that he sought, whoever it was by, and he was as keenly appreciative of good work by an almost unknown painter as he could be severely critical of an inferior work by a famous master. To him more than to anybody else, or rather to works he showed me from time to time, I am indebted for ocular evidence as to the fine quality to which some of the lesser-known painters of the eighteenth century could now and again rise.

Mr. Charles Davis, who for many years was one of King Edward's art advisers, was another well-known dealer who was always very nice to me personally though he also was not in the least desirous that I should ' write up ' his doings in the newspapers. It was over one of his transactions that I had my final break with the New York journal, for

inevitably when the editor discovered that I was 'wilfully withholding news,' we parted company. It became known than an American collector had acquired a famous collection of Wedgwood belonging to a certain peer.

'Why didn't we hear about this sooner?' I was asked. 'You never seem to know about these things in which we are most interested.'

'Well,' I let out incautiously, 'as a matter of fact Mr. Charles Davis showed me Lord T.'s collection about two months ago.'

'Then why on earth didn't you tell us about it at once?'

'Because it was only shown to me confidentially, and I was particularly asked not to write about it.'

He gasped. 'I guess you're too much of an oyster to suit me,' he said finally.

Some days later I called on Asher Wertheimer to inform him that I was no longer acting as London Correspondent for this journal. 'Never mind, Mr. Rutter,' said he, pushing me into an armchair, 'you'll never be a good news-getter, you're too scrupulous. You'd much better stick to criticism.'

What Asher Wertheimer was anybody may see by looking at Sargent's masterpiece in the National Gallery. Cigar in right hand, left thumb in trouser pocket, an enigmatic smile on his lips and an inscrutable twinkle in his eyes, there he stands for all time with his poodle by his side; a great Jew, a generous Jew, proud of his race, proud of his family, confident of his taste, satisfied with his judgment, but so full of learning that he can still be amused at the notion of anybody supposing that finality of knowledge in any subject can be attained; a great expert and a good fellow, shrewd but human, kindly and humorous.

There are many differences between London and Paris art-dealers. One thing I have noticed is that all the biggest dealers in London have been distinctly catholic in their business. With men like Sir Joseph Duveen, Asher Wertheimer, Charles Davis, etc., pictures are not much more

than a side-line; they purchase and sell important pictures from time to time, but they also trade in a large variety of other works of art, decorative furniture, tapestries, porcelain and all sorts of *objets d'art*. When they do traffic in paintings it is nearly always in works by Old Masters, and I do not think that in my time there have ever been in London such commanding figures, dealing almost exclusively with modern paintings, as, for example, Durand-Ruel, Sagot and Vollard in Paris.

Vollard is one of the most extraordinary dealers I have ever met. A tall, dark, heavy-looking man, he would lean morosely against the wall and scowl at you as if you were an intruder. His policy appeared to aim at being as insulting to would-be clients as it was possible to be. When I first saw him I thought he was the rudest person I had ever met in my life.

'No, I have nothing to show you,' he said in reply to my enquiry, 'absolutely nothing. Besides, what is the use of showing pictures to Englishmen, they do not understand painting, they do not know a fine picture when they see one. They know nothing, absolutely nothing. You have no good painters in your country. What? Sickert? Well, perhaps, he is a little interesting, because he has lived and studied well in Paris. But who else have you? Nobody, nobody at all.'

He went on in this strain for a long time, never changing his attitude and making me feel very uncomfortable. I could not escape realising that the sooner I got out into the street again the better he would be pleased.

Then, fortunately, there entered André Derain and Maurice de Vlamick, with whom I had some slight acquaintance. They greeted me, and presently whispered to Vollard that I was a writer, a critic.

'Ah!' said Vollard, 'you are not a collector. *Bien!*' and with that his whole manner altered. He became polite and charming. He began to look out things and show them to the three of us. 'But these are not important,'

he protested. 'You must see the pictures I have at home. They will interest you. We will have lunch and afterwards I will show them to you.'

He became positively genial. He insisted on taking us all out to lunch, and afterwards we went to his private apartment where he displayed a stack of magnificent paintings by Cézanne, Degas and Gauguin. We spent hours there. From time to time an assistant would come and whisper something in his ear, but Vollard would impatiently brush him aside. Once three people got as far as the corridor and tried to speak to him, but Vollard would not listen to them and went on talking to us. I began to apologise for taking up so much of his time, and expressed a fear that I was keeping him from more important business. 'It is nothing,' he said carelessly, 'they are only collectors.'

After spending something like six hours in his company I began to think that this man, whom I had at first regarded as abominable, was one of the nicest and most interesting persons I had ever met. Vollard certainly is a character.

Durand-Ruel was a very different type of man, as courtly, polite and charming to everybody as Vollard was usually the reverse. He was short and exceedingly dapper in his appearance, his clothes were spotless and tightly buttoned, he was always smiling, alert in his manner and quick on his feet. He used to remind me of a cheerful little robin hopping around in a bright, expectant manner.

I asked Durand-Ruel once if it was true that he had bought paintings by Claude Monet for a hundred francs apiece. 'But yes,' he said at once, 'that is quite true; but it was a long time ago and then nobody else would give him as much as twenty francs for them. It is not so easy to be a merchant of pictures: one needs courage.' And he began to tell me the story of how he built up his business and how near he had once been to complete failure and ruin.

'When I became interested in impressionist painting,' he said, 'I sold all the stock of pictures by the men of

Barbizon that I possessed, and I bought Manets and Monets, Sisleys, Pissarros and Renoirs. I invested over a quarter of a million in impressionist paintings, I spent all the money I had, and I lived for two years on credit before at last I began to find a few collectors who would buy these pictures. I was very anxious, life during those years was very difficult, but at last the tide began to turn and people grew to appreciate the impressionists. Now, of course, it is different.' His eyes twinkled. 'I cannot go to Monsieur Monet to-morrow and buy one of his pictures for a hundred francs.'

A dealer like Durand-Ruel deserves to make a fortune, because he has confidence in his own judgment and is not afraid to take big risks. There again is another difference between Paris and London. The Paris dealer is not afraid to buy pictures outright from young artists ; he may not pay much, but he pays cash down. Pêre Sagot, as he was affectionately called, bought paintings by Picasso and Herbin, when they were quite young and unknown, and he paid cash. Sagot's way, if he thought the work of a painter promising, was to go into his studio, look around, and then, if he was satisfied, say, 'Very well, I'll take the lot and give you fifty francs for each canvas.' Probably even the youngest English painter would feel insulted if somebody offered him two pounds for a picture, but if a dealer offered him two pounds apiece for fifty or sixty pictures, he would be wise to think twice.

But what London dealer would make such an offer ? It is the rarest thing in the world for a London dealer to buy paintings outright, unless the painter is a well-known artist who has arrived. The usual system in England is for the dealer to accept the work of an artist for sale on commission. If it sells, he gets his twenty-five or thirty-three-and-a-third per cent. ; if it does not sell, he loses nothing. That may or may not be a safe way of doing business, but I am sure it is not the way in which to make either a fortune or a reputation.

One day in 1905 when I was at the Grafton Galleries, M. Durand-Ruel introduced me to an Irish collector who, he said, was also interested in impressionist paintings. This was Hugh P. Lane, who was then just beginning to form the great collection which was later to be the subject of a dispute between England and Ireland. Till Lane visited Paris with Orpen in 1905 he knew little about and cared little for modern French painting, so that when I first made his acquaintance he had all the zeal of a recent convert. He had an immense knowledge of and enthusiasm for the Old Masters, gained during his earlier apprenticeship to Martin Colnaghi at the Marlborough Gallery, but he had only recently begun to turn his attention to modern painting. It was no doubt his friendship with Orpen and other artists which gave this new direction to his thoughts, and once roused to a recognition of the importance of modern painting and of the fact that Dublin had no gallery of modern art, the repairing of this omission became one of the chief objects of his life.

A sharp distinction has to be drawn between Lane's traffic in old masters and his purchases of modern works ; the first was more or less a matter of business, the second was wholly a labour of love. Indeed, as he often said himself, his main business in life was ' to make money by selling old masters in order that he might spend it on living ones,' and throughout his life he adhered to this rule with the utmost disinterestedness and generosity.

In the early days of our friendship, I was a little envious of Lane, who was in a position to buy—as it was then thought for Dublin—the very impressionist paintings which I was vainly struggling to get purchased for a national collection in London. But Lane was irresistible, and he soon persuaded me to smother my disappointment at London's lethargy and abet him in his projects for Dublin. I was able to influence certain gifts which he coveted, and when the house in Harcourt Street had been secured and the collection hung, Lane invited me to Ireland for the

opening of the gallery, and got me to give a lecture in Dublin on impressionist painting.

My chief recollection of this visit was the utter incredulity on the part of the citizens of Dublin that the pictures given to them could be of any real value. The view generally entertained was expressed by some Irish cousins of mine who came to see me after my lecture. 'Of course,' said they, 'we understand you've got to crack them up in public. You are Lane's friend. But you can tell us. They aren't any good really, are they? They can't be. If they were any good they wouldn't be in Dublin.' Nothing I could say would remove these suspicions, and they went away telling me I was 'very loyal' to my friend, and wondering to themselves exactly what his 'little game' was.

I am afraid this was the general attitude of Dublin at the time, though probably now that they have lost the pictures, they value impressionist paintings more highly. Even then there were exceptions, and the intellectuals of Dublin welcomed the collection and keenly appreciated it. W. B. Yeats was very enthusiastic, and I remember spending a most enjoyable evening in his rooms with George Russell ('AE') and others, when the collection was discussed over a flagon of burgundy. Yeats, who delighted us by his sonorous recitation of some of Oscar Wilde's fables, uttered a penetrating criticism that evening which I have never forgotten.

We had been talking about the work of Degas and somebody raised the question whether there was any real beauty in his pictures of the frequenters of shabby cafés. This naturally led to various attempts to define beauty, and the debate was wound up by a remark from Yeats. 'I think,' he said, 'that the great difference between Pagan art and Christian art is, that whereas the Greeks sought beauty in proportion, Christian artists have sought beauty in character.'

Though one heard of Lane paying large sums for the purchase of pictures, he always professed to be 'hard up,' and he certainly was exceedingly frugal in his personal

expenditure. He was an abstemious person and one of the things that drew me to him was that, like myself, he cared very little about eating or drinking and was always ready to make his lunch off a bun and a cup of coffee. Set dinners were rather a bother to him, and he was apt to regard them as a waste of time and money. I think the meal he enjoyed most—again like myself—was tea.

One afternoon in May, 1906, I was coming away from the London Library when I met Lane at the corner of King Street. He was in a great state of excitement and carried me off to tea at the A.B.C. in Piccadilly, where he told me he had just bought a portrait by Titian under the noses of all the dealers at Christie's for two thousand one hundred guineas. This was the work now known as a 'Portrait of a Man in a Red Cap,' though it was catalogued as a 'Portrait of Lorenzo dei Medici' in the sale. The painting was thickly coated with dirt and varnish, and was thought by several experts to be the work either of Francesco Vecellio or Moretto. But even in its darkened and dirty condition, Lane was confident that it was an authentic Titian.

'Lucky you to have two thousand guineas,' I remarked when he told me of his purchase.

'Good Lord!' he exclaimed, 'I haven't got two thousand.'

'Then how are you going to pay for it?' I asked.

'Oh,' said he easily, 'my bank will see to that. Fortunately they believe in my judgment and will be willing to back me to that extent.'

Presumably the bank did, for Lane got the picture and, after he had cleaned it, exhibited it in the National Loan Collection at the Grafton Galleries. There, restored to its original beauty, it was universally accepted as a Titian, and a very fine example at that. Mr. Charles Ricketts, A.R.A., who formerly thought it to be an early work by Francesco Vecellio, handsomely retracted his opinion, and his remarks on the changes since the cleaning are illuminating. 'The background, formerly brown,' he wrote, 'had become a luminous warm grey, the glove and fur, which I had thought

indifferent, revealed the tender pigment of the master; the painting of the linen in "pâte sur pâte" was a practice of Titian's. The work stood out, not as a mere interesting problem, but a masterpiece superior in preservation to the Cobham "Ariosto," contemporary with, or slightly later than, the beautiful portrait at Temple Newsam.' Thus was Hugh Lane's judgment justified. Subsequently he sold the portrait to Mr. Grenfell for £25,000.

Hugh Lane's great advantage was that, in addition to the experience of an earnest student and collector, he possessed the intimate knowledge of the expert cleaner. The years he had spent in handling and cleaning Old Masters with Martin Colnaghi were invaluable and gave him an insight into the technique of the masters which nobody but a practical cleaner of long experience ever has. It is a distinct branch of art knowledge, and Lane had it literally at his finger-tips.

Some years later I had a still more striking demonstration of Lane's powers as a cleaner and picture restorer. He was then established in Lindsey House (100 Cheyne Walk), where he took me to see a portrait he had recently bought. At the first glance this painting appeared to belong to the school of Lawrence, the lady had dark hair and was in a dark gown of the Lawrence period, and had her hands hidden in a big muff. I confess I thought it was by some pupil of Lawrence till Lane said, 'But look at the face, man, look at the eyes! I tell you it's a Romney. It can't be anything else. The face proves it, and all the rest is overpainting.'

Confident in his judgment Lane set to work on the surface of the painting, and sure enough as he rubbed away the heavy black paint at the top, powdered hair and a light-blue picture hat began to appear. Similarly as he treated the lower part of the picture the black dress gave place to a gauze handkerchief and white gown, the muff disappeared and revealed pale arms and bare hands. When the whole surface had been cleaned the picture stood out as a typical Romney portrait,

Not content with this achievement Lane pursued his enquiries further. The portrait was of a Mrs. Edward Taylor, with whose family Lane got in touch, and eventually among some old family papers was discovered Romney's receipt for the money paid him for painting this portrait. When he informed me of this documentary evidence confirming his identification of the portrait as a Romney, Lane told me he had gathered that this lady had lived to an advanced age. His theory was that since the Romney portrait confessed her age too plainly, in her later years the sitter had called in the assistance of one of the followers of Lawrence to alter the picture and knock some twenty years off her age by presenting her as a young lady of the Lawrence period. This portrait is now in the National Gallery of Ireland at Dublin.

Some few months after I had been appointed Curator of the Leeds Art Gallery, I met Lane in London, and said to him jokingly, ' Well, Lane, what are you going to do for my gallery ? You know I gave you a Whistler, so you ought to do something handsome for Leeds.' Somewhat to my surprise Lane took my question quite seriously, and said thoughtfully, ' Yes, I suppose I ought. How would you like a Mancini ? ' Naturally I jumped at the suggestion, so he said, ' Well, come along home with me now and choose one.' My choice was the superb ' Portrait of the Artist's Father,' which now hangs in the Leeds Art Gallery. Lane's last words to me on the matter were, ' Mind you, Rutter, I am giving the picture to *you*, and you can do what you like with it ; but Leeds ought to be able to afford to buy modern pictures.' The remark was entirely characteristic of Lane's generosity to his friends and his zeal for the well-being of living artists.

While in his latter years Lane was preoccupied chiefly with the building up of the Dublin Gallery of Modern Art and with the patronage of living artists, he was also greatly distressed at the persistent exodus of old masters from England to America. One of the last activities of his

life was to stir up an interest in art in South Africa. He had a great idea for the preservation of masterpieces of painting for the British Empire, if they could not be kept within the shores of Great Britain. He felt strongly, and no doubt rightly, that only the South African millionaire could compete on equal terms with the American millionaire for the possession of masterpieces, and he was only beginning his great work for South Africa when he went down on the *Lusitania* in 1915. He started the collections for Johannesburg and Cape Town, but these are not what they would have been had their originator been spared us longer, for the truth is that there is nobody who could carry on Lane's work in South Africa, nobody yet has even been able to carry on his work in Dublin. The loss of Sir Hugh Lane was irreparable and irreplaceable, for men with his taste, his knowledge, his tact, his ability, and his charm are almost impossible to find, and it was only the rare combination of qualities which Hugh Lane possessed which enabled him to reconcile warring interests and abate political prejudices, to overcome difficulties and achieve the impossible. His life work is incomplete and will probably remain so, but no other man could have done so much as he did. Three great galleries, in Dublin, Johannesburg and Cape Town, owe their existence to his initiative, while the Tate Gallery is the richer for the Lane Collection of pictures by the French Impressionists. Whether it is right for these last to be in London instead of Dublin is a question which has not yet been finally settled. Controversy still exists as to the intentions of Sir Hugh Lane on this matter, and for my part I can only say that while he was naturally incensed at the dilatory action of the Dublin Municipality in providing suitable accommodation for the art treasures he had amassed, I feel confident that had Lane lived he would have had his way ; an acceptable art gallery would have been built, and Dublin instead of London would have possessed the Manets, Renoirs, Monets and other French works now at Millbank.

# XII

## THE 'ALLIED ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION'

WHILE staying in Paris during the summer of 1907 with my friend Naoum Aronson, the Franco-Russian sculptor, the conversation turned one evening on the fruitless expense of sending works from the Continent to London exhibitions.

'It is impossible to exhibit in England,' said one of the artists present, who complained that he was tired of paying the heavy cost of transporting works to London only to have them rejected by a British jury and then involve himself in further expense in getting the rejected works back to his studio in Paris.

'Tell me,' said Aronson, 'have you nothing in England like our *Société des Artistes Indépendants*? I mean, a society in which an artist pays a subscription of so much a year, and has the right to exhibit a certain number of works without submitting them to any jury. You see,' he continued, 'we should not mind so much paying the cost of carriage to London if we could be sure that our works would be exhibited. But to pay, and then to have nothing shown —really, that is too disgusting.'

'No,' said I, 'we have no society at all like that in England.'

'Then why the devil don't *you* start one!' retorted Aronson.

This conversation set me thinking, and when several Paris artists promised support if a society on the lines of the *Indépendants* could be founded in England, I went into the matter seriously and undertook to organise a no-jury exhibition in London for the following year.

London artists whom I sounded as to the prospects of

such a society were far from sanguine. They foresaw immense difficulties ; they said the project would need a vast amount of capital, and they predicted I should not be able to find in London any gallery big enough for the purpose.

Now from the very start I was definitely opposed to the society being 'proprietary,' and I was determined not to have it 'bossed' by any capitalist. My view was that it ought to be a co-operative and self-supporting concern on the lines of the Paris society, only adapted to meet English laws and conditions. By Christmas, 1907, about twenty London artists had definitely promised to join and support such a society if I could get it started.

Lucien Pissarro, an original member of the Paris *Indépendants*, was one of the first to back me up and give me much practical advice and assistance. Walter Sickert was another staunch supporter of the scheme which was also enthusiastically welcomed by all Sickert's circle, particularly the late Spencer Gore and Harold Gilman, both of whom worked hard in the early years to make the society a success. Gerard Chowne, Alexander Jamieson, Gerald Kelly, J. D. Fergusson, S. J. Peploe of Edinburgh and Alison Martin of Liverpool were others who welcomed the idea from the start.

Walter Bayes was very doubtful when I first approached him on the matter. 'I know exactly what you are going to say,' he began, 'you are going to tell me that your exhibition will be better than the Royal Academy.'

'No, I'm not,' I retorted, 'my exhibition is going to be bigger and worse!'

'In that case,' said Bayes, 'I'll join it with pleasure.'

I too had heard too much of exhibitions that were to be 'better than' the Academy, and I knew the British Public too well to imagine they could ever be attracted by any such talk. I was for big battalions every time. Quality must be in a minority in every art exhibition, but Quantity is always impressive.

'Why pay a shilling to see two thousand works at the

Academy when for the same money you can see four thousand at our exhibition ? ' That is the kind of argument that impresses the hard-headed business man, and it appealed to Bayes who has a sense of humour as well as a fastidiously refined taste in matters of art.

During the winter of 1907-1908 I made the acquaintance of a Polish artist, Jan de Holewinski, who had been requested by Princess Marie Tenicheff to organise for her in London an exhibition of Russian Arts and Crafts. Our respective aims had so much in common that we decided to join forces, and endeavour to introduce into the London ' independents ' a feature of the Paris Autumn Salon, namely a special section each year showing the art of another country.

It was Jan de Holewinski who saw the possibilities of the Royal Albert Hall as an exhibition centre. We wanted a large place and this was the largest we could find. So we decided to take the plunge. We put up fifty pounds apiece, paid the deposit, and definitely booked the Royal Albert Hall for the month of July, 1908. This was before our society had been formed or registered. But as soon as we had secured a hall in which to hold the exhibition, we set to work to put the project on a regular footing.

On the advice of friends who knew more about business and company promoting than I did, the society was registered in February, 1908, under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts. It was never intended to be a money-making concern, and I desired that its financial administration should be beyond reproach and as strictly supervised as was legally possible.

My idea was that the business affairs of the society should be managed by a small committee of business men, and the artistic affairs by a larger committee of artists. This combination worked exceedingly well and carried the society successfully through the first difficult years of its existence. Trouble only began years later, when the business men imagined they knew something about art, and the artists thought they knew something about business.

After considerable debate, it was decided to register the society as the 'Allied Artists' Association Ltd.' The reasons prompting the choice of this title were:

(i) That it suggested a co-operative concern;

(ii) That it indicated an international aim; and

(iii) That it pointed to a society containing, not only painters and sculptors, but gravers, craftworkers and all other art-workers as well.

Further, the alliteration was useful for publicity and gave the society an early place in any alphabetical list.

As soon as the association—generally known as the 'A.A.A.'—was registered, Holewinski and I took an office in Chancery Lane and began circularising. The choice of Chancery Lane for our headquarters was purely personal. In the same building two old Cambridge friends of mine already had offices, Elliot C. Gray, a solicitor, and W. E. H. Humphries, a motor-expert and a director of several companies. These two men, with Holewinski, and myself as secretary, formed the first Committee of Management of the A.A.A., and it was convenient for us all to be in the same building.

We began operations by sending out a letter explaining the objects of the society to a picked list of one hundred artists whom I thought likely to be interested. These were invited to become Founder Members, and so carefully had we picked this list that out of the hundred invited no less than eighty accepted the invitation and joined the A.A.A. Among them, in addition to the artists already mentioned, were Messrs. Brangwyn, Walter Crane, Epstein, Dudley Hardy, Augustus John, Lavery, Ambrose M'Evoy, James Pryde, Cayley Robinson, Theodore Roussel, Harold Stabler, Wilson Steer and John Tweed.

With these and other well-known names to encourage others, a prospectus was then printed and sent out broadcast. In a few months unmistakable evidence was forthcoming that English artists wanted a society in which they could exhibit what works they pleased, without submitting

them to a jury. Before the end of June over six hundred artists had joined the Association.

But even in these early days it was not all plain sailing. It amazed me to discover that most of the men who joined were much more keen on keeping other artists out of the society than in bringing in new members. In 1908 I was still very innocent, and knowing comparatively few painters —and those men of generous dispositions—I had no idea of the rabid professional jealousy which exists among artists.

On one occasion I interviewed a very well-known member of the New English Art Club to enlist his support, and most unfortunately I mentioned that another member of the N.E.A.C. had already joined us. I had put my foot into it badly.

'That settles it,' said the artist in question. 'If he's in it, I certainly shan't join.'

'But why,' I protested, 'he is a member of your own Club.'

'That's just it,' came the answer. 'It's bad enough to have to exhibit with the swine at the New English, but I'm not going to exhibit with him anywhere else if I can help it.'

Useless to explain that in the A.A.A. no member could interfere with another member's work. As a matter of fact, I would much rather have had the artist I was talking to as a member, for I have always admired his work and liked the man personally, whereas his *bête noir* never attracted me personally either as artist or man. But there was nothing to be done. Personal considerations could not be allowed to affect an association which was founded on the principle of inclusion, not exclusion.

Another thing which surprised me then—though now I have got used to it—was to find that the men who were most revolutionary in their painting and sculpture were invariably ultra-reactionary and 'die-hard' conservatives in politics: while men who were professed socialists and advanced thinkers in politics were apt to be extremely conservative in their art.

I remember after our first two or three exhibitions, the late Walter Crane—a disciple of William Morris in politics as well as art—came up to me and expressed his doubt as to the wisdom of the 'open door' policy. 'I'm not sure that we ought to let all these things in,' he ruminated. 'Some are dreadfully bad, and a selecting jury would protect the public from seeing them.'

'But Mr. Crane,' I objected, 'this is a democratic exhibition. We can't do anything like that. All our members have equal rights. This is socialism in art.'

'Oh,' said Walter Crane. 'I hadn't thought of it like that. I suppose you're right. But,' he concluded, 'I don't like it.'

A general meeting of the Association was held in the spring of 1908, when the 'Rules of Exhibition' were drawn up. These rules were based largely on those of the Paris society—which then had already been in existence for some twenty-five years—but they were adopted with certain alterations. The chief of these was proposed by Walter Sickert, and was accepted by an overwhelming majority of members. In Paris the works were hung in alphabetical order, and this gave cause for innumerable complaints. Sickert proposed that in order to obviate any possible chance of favouritism in the arrangement of works, lots should be drawn for the order in which the exhibits were to be hung, and that the catalogue order should be decided by ballot.

I shall never forget the crushing retort made by Sickert, when a minor painter got up and objected, plaintively asserting that in his opinion the 'best works by the best artists' ought to be given the best places in the exhibition.

'In this society,' said Sickert, 'there are no good works or bad works: there are only works by shareholders.'

Though the procedure initiated by Sickert was challenged at subsequent meetings of the Association, proposals to do away with the ballot were always defeated. This lost the A.A.A. some members who held that the arrangement and

classification of works would improve the appearance of the exhibition, but the fairness of the system commended itself to the good sense of the majority of the members.

Brangwyn was one of those who did not see eye to eye with Sickert and myself about the democratic constitution of the A.A.A. He had a wonderful idea for making the exhibition look pretty. 'If you have the great floor put down over the stalls and arena and then drape the hall with silk hangings from the roof to the floor, I think the Albert Hall might be made into quite a good exhibition gallery.'

'Yes, Mr. Brangwyn,' said I, 'but who is to pay for all the miles of silk required?'

'Can't you get somebody to give you the money?' he asked.

I explained that our idea was to make the A.A.A. self-supporting and not to depend on charity.

When I told Brangwyn about the ballot, and that the meeting had elected a committee of forty to superintend the hanging of the exhibition according to the rules of the Association, he promptly said, 'Why forty? They'll only get in each other's way. Far too many. Much better leave it all to Jimmy Pryde and myself. We two could do it.'

I explained that some four thousand works had got to be hung and placed inside three days, and we thought the only way to get it done in the time, was to cut up the exhibition space into forty sections, and put one delegate in charge of each section with two workmen to do the actual hanging.

But Brangwyn was not really in sympathy with the policy of the A.A.A. He did not object to everything sent in being hung, but he thought somebody—preferably himself and Pryde—ought to arrange the exhibition and decide what should be placed in a good light and what might more discreetly be hung in one of the numerous dark corridors of the Albert Hall.

Brangwyn's attitude towards the exhibition rather reminded me of that of an astute South American President

who, when told of a popular rising for an extension of the franchise, said testily to his staff, 'Well, give them the vote. What does it matter who has the vote so long as we have the counting?'

Under the circumstances it was not surprising that Brangwyn eventually declined to exhibit, and retired from the Association in the first year.

Theodore Roussel, who was one of the Hanging Committee for the first year, had a much better idea of the aims and principles of the Association. He was not very fortunate in the works which happened to come within his section according to the ballot, but he hung them fairly and was not disheartened. On the private view day a fastidious lady who admired his own paintings and etchings came up to him and said, 'Oh, Mr. Roussel, however could you hang those dreadful pictures.'

'My dear lady,' replied Roussel with one of his most charming smiles, 'we have the same privilege, as at the Royal Academy, in hanging bad pictures; only here *we have not the right to refuse the good.*'

To adapt the Royal Albert Hall to meet the requirements of a huge art exhibition was no light matter. We had to put battens all round the walls of the top gallery and have rows of screens made for use upstairs and downstairs. The initial expense of all this woodwork, for which we made a contract with John Barker & Co., exceeded five hundred pounds. We had nearly a hundred workmen employed three days on hanging the exhibition, and with much still to be done on the third afternoon we worked through nearly all that night. Holewinski and I turned one of the boxes into a temporary bedroom, but I don't think either of us got much sleep that night. In order to persuade the carpenters to work overtime, on the advice of the foremen we sent out for copious supplies of beer, and to see men staggering about the hall with twenty-foot canvasses—and we had some monsters—filled us both with anxiety.

Yet there was only one accident, and that not a very

serious one. Dudley Hardy was superintending the hanging of his section—a very large one—when a carpenter fell from a ladder and broke his wrist. With that kindliness which made Hardy a prince of good fellows, he at once got a cab, took the man to St. George's Hospital to have the injury attended to, and waited there till the man's wrist had been dressed.

While he was pacing about the waiting-room one of the doctors came up to Dudley Hardy and, imagining him to be an out-patient, he enquired genially, 'Well, my man, and what are you suffering from?'

'Well,' replied Hardy in his dry way, 'chiefly *impecuniosity*!'

When the private view day dawned I was footsore and weary, for it was not till the second exhibition in the following year that I learned the wisdom of superintending operations on a bicycle—like a rowing coach—on which I circled slowly round the hall keeping an eye on the workmen. But the first year I tackled the formidable acreage of the Albert Hall on foot.

Sickert was wiser. 'You run about too much, Rutter,' he told me. The first thing he did when he arrived was to get a chair, place it in the middle of his section, and thence give his directions seated. 'When you are as old as I am,' said the perennially youthful Sickert, 'you will sit down whenever you can.'

The objects of the A.A.A. were set forth very fairly by a writer in *The Spectator*, who reviewed the first exhibition of 1908. 'Why should a censor come between the painter and the public?' he asked. 'Why should an artist not have that freedom which an author possesses of having his book printed and laid before the world for judgment?'

Naturally an exhibition which invited the public to pick and choose for themselves, to use their own judgment, an exhibition which made no pretence of grading works as 'good, bad or indifferent,' which—worst of all—kept prices as low as possible, was not exactly welcomed by the ordinary

run of art dealers. Several of them were distinctly hostile, and though the Press generally was fair and sympathetic to the venture, a few 'superior persons' adopted a lofty air of condescension and took the tone that no new talent was revealed.

'Of course all the good pictures here are by artists we know already,' one of these people observed to me, 'there is nothing new that is really good.' He was most annoyed when I suggested that the 'new-good' was not always recognised at first sight.

Some of our weaker brethren at one of the preliminary meetings had urged the necessity of getting 'big artists with names' to contribute to the exhibition.

'Be patient,' said Sickert. 'In a few years we shall have our own big men.'

His words were prophetic. Among the exhibitors that first year, who were quite unknown in 1908, but to-day have established reputations, were C. H. Collins Baker, Alan Beeton, Vanessa Bell, Robert Bevan, John Copley, Harold Gilman, Charles Ginner, Hamilton Hay, Paul Henry, Gerald Kelly, Ludovic Rodo and Abenendro Nath Tagore, the Indian painter. I am very tempted to add the name of Walter Bayes, because though he was already known as a critic and painter in water-colours, his decorative oil paintings were a revelation to most visitors.

'Who is this man Bayes?' Sickert asked me during the hanging, 'his paintings are very good.'

It was my privilege to introduce these two artists to each other, and so Walter Bayes came into Sickert's circle and later was, for a time, a member of his 'Camden Town Group.' Several other interesting combinations were the result of the Allied Artists' Association.

After the first exhibition it was decided at a general meeting that, since the duties of the Hanging Committee were purely supervisory, all members should be eligible and that invitations should be sent in alphabetical order to each member to serve, in rotation, on this committee.

For the second exhibition in 1909, Walter Bayes was elected Chairman of the Hanging Committee, and among others who consented to serve was the late Robert Bevan. So Bevan became acquainted with Bayes, and—through Bayes and myself—with Sickert.

In the third year we got as far as G., and Harold Gilman, Spencer Gore and Charles Ginner were all together on the Hanging Committee. Gilman and Gore were old friends who had been at the Slade together, but Ginner knew nobody. The first year Gore, who was generous to a fault in finding and proclaiming merit in other painters' work, came up and asked me if I knew anything about Ginner. 'He's a painter,' said Gore warmly. I told him all I knew was that Ginner lived in Paris, that I had never seen him, but that his pictures were a nuisance to handle because the paint stood out in lumps and was still wet!

When Ginner came from Paris to London in 1910 to serve on the Hanging Committee, he called on me at the office in Chancery Lane. A few days later I introduced him to Spencer Gore as a fellow 'Hanger' and as the first man in London to admire his paintings. Gore liked Ginner the man as much as he did Ginner the painter: so did Gilman, and the three became great friends. This friendship was a determining factor in Ginner's subsequent decision to make his home in London instead of Paris. Born at Cannes, the son of an English physician there, Ginner had been educated in France and, apart from a few visits to England and two sea-voyages, had spent all his life in that country.

Nothing amuses me more than to read now and again in a newspaper that Charles Ginner is a 'pupil' of Walter Sickert. Pure nonsense. Ginner's own peculiar style was definitely formed before he came to London and got to know Sickert. He had been a pupil in Paris of the Spaniard, Anglada-Camarasa—a fine rich colourist like himself—but the object of his deepest devotion—then as now—was Vincent Van Gogh. The common bond between Sickert

and Ginner was Paris, but there is no trace of either having influenced the other in the least. Sickert's influence on Gore and Gilman is another matter, though once, when I said something about it to Sickert, he reproved me severely: 'Ah,' said he, 'but you forget how much Gore has influenced me!'

Sweet lovable Gore! with his charming disposition he could not help influencing all who knew him, and influencing them for good. One of my most cherished memories is of accompanying Gore on his first visit to the Russian Ballet. I refer to the original production in London; not to Diaghileff's smart revivals, but the production of that genius Fokine, when Nijinsky and Karsavina were the stars and Anna Pavlova had a minor part. Those were the great days of the Russian ballet, and even the admirable *decor* that has been introduced into the more recent ballets cannot compensate me for the superior artistry and choreographic grace of Fokine's productions.

Gore, whose devotion to the ballet had already led him to spend night after night sketching in pastels from the gallery of the Alhambra, sat spell-bound throughout the performance at Covent Garden. When the curtain fell he turned to me, with tears in his eye, and said, 'I've dreamt of things like this, but I never thought I should see them.'

To return to history—it was entirely through the Allied Artists' Association that Bayes, Bevan and Ginner became members of the 'Camden Town Group,' which ultimately grew into the 'London Group.' Though a layman and not a painter, by reason of my personal friendship with the founders I shared the travail which preceded the birth of that exhibiting body.

Augustus John had been a founder member of the Allied Artists' Association though he did not exhibit. But then John never does exhibit anywhere unless you go and fetch his pictures yourself, and in 1908 I was too busy to do that. He joined because, like the good fellow he is, he thoroughly

approved of the principles of the A.A.A., and knew it would help others though he had no need of it himself.

After the establishment of the A.A.A., and after most of us had spent the August and September in Dieppe, a number of us got into the habit of dining each Saturday night at a little hotel in Golden Square, and going on afterwards to the Café Royal. The party usually consisted of Lucien Pissarro, Sickert, John, Gore, Gilman and myself. Ginner joined us later, and sometimes Bevan and his wife, a Polish lady who painted under her maiden name, S. de Karlowska. Each Saturday the conversation used to turn on the New English Art Club, and the burning question was, 'Should those present endeavour to capture and reform the Club, or should they secede (those who were members) and start a rival society?'

Gilman, an incorruptible puritan, who would have no half-measures, no bargaining, but stood solid for root-and-branch reform, consistently advocated the formation of a new society. John was as consistently loyal. Again and again I have heard him declare that he owed everything to the New English Art Club and he was definitely opposed to the formation of a new society. Gore was undecided, torn between his loyalty to the Club and the Slade, and his sympathy with Gilman's arguments.

Dear witty Sickert—as all who know him would expect—argued this week on one side, and next week—just as eloquently—on the other. Pissarro was judicial, on the whole he favoured reform rather than secession, but the thing which always impressed me was the immense respect with which John and Sickert, as well as the rest, always listened to anything Pissarro had to say about painting. I felt, and I believe they felt, that Pissarro was the master of us all, the man from whom we could all of us learn.

A half-hearted attempt was made at capturing the New English committee, but of course it failed. My fellow-diners were not the kind of men to excel in intrigue and manipulate affairs by back-stairs influence. So little talent

had they for underhand diplomacy and insidious wire-pulling, that when they eventually formed their own society they were unable to protect it against assault from without.

The new society made its debut as 'The Camden Town Group' at the old Carfax Gallery in Bury Street, and in addition to the artists already mentioned the exhibitors included Wyndham Lewis, who had been with us at Dieppe and joined the A.A.A. in 1911. Later it moved to the Goupil Gallery, augmented its membership, and changed its name to the 'London Group.' Then in 1914 came the first blow. Spencer Gore died of pneumonia in the early spring, after catching cold while painting in Richmond Park. His tact and personal charm had held warring elements in check and reconciled irreconcilables; with his disappearance the first signs of disintegration began to show. Then came the war and in the general upheaval the politics of painting were obscured.

During this war period Roger Fry was elected a member of the London Group, and while I have the utmost respect for Fry himself, both as a painter and a writer, I feel that his satellites, the rag, tag and bobtail of his following, lowered the old standards of the London Group.

For a time Gilman as President held the group together with judicial fairness, for Gilman scorned favouritism; then Gilman died during the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919, and the way was clear for Fry's followers to capture the executive of the Group. Henceforward little new talent was welcome unless it conformed to the French-derived conventions of the governing clique, and several of the most distinguished of the earlier exhibitors found themselves out of sympathy with the executive and retired from the Group. The loss of artists like Wyndham Lewis, Wadsworth and Etchells was, in my opinion, not adequately compensated by the gain of Roger Fry and Duncan Grant.

Before the debâcle of the London Group I had left London. In 1912 I was appointed Curator of the Leeds

City Art Gallery, and in April that year I resigned the secretaryship of the A.A.A. I had borne the brunt of organising four exhibitions at the Royal Albert Hall, and my Committee of Management had ' cut the coat according to the cloth ' with such care that, despite our heavy expenses and fluctuating receipts, we had ended each year with a small balance in hand towards next year's working. I don't think our total sales ever much exceeded five hundred pounds in one year, but then our prices were small and the sales were widely distributed. Strangely enough, comparatively few regular collectors seized the opportunities of securing the bargains which these Albert Hall exhibitions offered. We seemed to find a new public, chiefly people who ' knew nothing about art but knew what they liked,' often young couples who were setting up house and wanted a few pictures for their walls. Then towards the end of July we used to get shoals of visitors from the Dominions overseas. They would drive up in motor-coaches to see the Albert Hall, and finding an exhibition on they paid the entrance fee cheerfully and often bought a small water-colour or piece of pottery to take back as a ' souvenir ' to Australia or New Zealand.

Though mindful that we had ' no good or bad pictures, but only pictures by shareholders,' my heart often ached to compare what was bought with what remained unsold. Occasionally I had a triumph. I remember persuading a lady to buy a painting by Gilman though she protested she simply hated it. But I assured her that she would get to like it, and I hope by now she has done so. If not I should be happy to buy it back at the price she paid for it.

One of my most welcome surprises was when Michael Sadler, the novelist, then an undergraduate of Balliol, bought a complete set of Kandinsky's woodcuts. He was certainly the first man in England thus to show his appreciation of the Munich expressionist, and in the following year he persuaded his father, now Sir Michael Sadler, to buy one of Kandinsky's paintings.

To tell the full story of the Allied Artists' Association would require a whole volume—and it is a story worth telling some day. Here I can only briefly summarise its decline and fall.

In 1913 it had a most successful year at the Royal Albert Hall—too successful, because since it had been visited by Royalty several members had visions of turning the Private View into a great social event. Meanwhile there had already arisen trouble between the artists and the businessmen. The latter—quite wrongly—objected to the exhibition of a certain painting of the nude which they considered 'immoral,' and most foolishly dragged in poor dear Hilton Carter, the manager of the Royal Albert Hall—who had always been most kind and lenient in his dealings with Holewinski and myself—and persuaded him to order its removal under threat of police intervention. Both sides wired frantically to me at Leeds. My view was that everything should be hung and remain hung till the police themselves came and took it down. (What an advertisement the exhibition would have had if the police had done so !) But before I could get down to London the harm was done and was irremediable.

The artists, who justly resented the interference of the business men in art matters, now wanted to manage the financial affairs of the Association as well. At a special meeting a vote of censure was passed on my two old friends, and they accordingly resigned. A new Committee of Management was elected, with myself as nominal Chairman. Holewinski was the sole survivor of the old committee, and as colleagues he was given Jacob Epstein—whom Gilman considered 'sound' on the morality question —Alexander Jamieson, and E. Eyton Baines, a solicitor. The last, of course, was the one member with knowledge of practical affairs. The secretary was E. Armitage M'Cann, who hitherto had had more experience as an advertising agent than of running art-exhibitions.

M'Cann, dazzled by the presence of Princess Patricia in

1913, had big ideas, and he found plenty of members to support his ' forward ' policy. The Albert Hall was ' not good enough,' the month of July was ' not good enough,' so the Holland Park Hall was taken from 12th June to 2nd July. It was going to cost the Association more than double the expense of the Albert Hall exhibitions, but I was told this would be met by enormously increased receipts in admissions and percentages on sales.

Living at Leeds, it was impossible for me to take any active part in the administration of the association. My chairmanship was very nominal. Personally I was opposed to leaving the Albert Hall, but I knew a great many members strongly disliked the place and the time of the exhibition. I thought it was only fair to give M'Cann a chance to show what he could do. Accordingly I raised no strong objection and trusted to Baines and Jamieson—who is a level-headed fellow as well as a very sincere painter—to watch the finances of the society.

I must admit that from a social and artistic standpoint the Holland Park Exhibition was the greatest success the A.A.A. ever had. All the artists were delighted with the appearance of the exhibition, the tasteful decoration, and the shrubs among the sculpture. There was an evening reception with a Blue Hungarian band—or something of that sort—and the women-painters wore all their jewels and we began to think we were going to be ' better than the Academy.'

But alas ! the sales were lower than they had ever been, the admissions were fewer, and piles and piles of catalogues remained unsold. To see Augustus John standing in admiration for fully twenty minutes before Wyndham Lewis's ' Night Attack ' was some consolation to me, but it did not help the balance-sheet.

Then the war broke out. M'Cann, who held a master's certificate, immediately joined the navy. Baines did a little figuring and worked out that the Association was four hundred pounds in debt, in debt for the first time in its existence. And the bank balance was practically exhausted.

They telegraphed to me to come down to attend an emergency meeting, and I was asked to take hold of the Association and do something. There was not much that could be done with a war on, but I submitted that the only way out of the difficulty was to hold no exhibition in 1915 and appeal for subscriptions with which to pay off our debts. This programme was unanimously adopted.

Next I interviewed the Association's creditors, explained the situation to them and told them the truth, when I said the A.A.A. had no assets except a few pedestals, screens and other bits of wood. The proposition I put to them was that if they would accept a composition of thirteen shillings and fourpence in the pound, I would undertake to raise a voluntary subscription to pay them off: otherwise the Association would have to be wound up and go into liquidation. After some discussion they all accepted these terms of settlement. We held another meeting, appointed a board of trustees to collect subscriptions and settle the debts. Bevan was elected Honorary Treasurer for this special fund, and he conducted the settlement to the entire satisfaction of all concerned.

In 1915 there was no exhibition, but during that year I discovered that the Yorkshire Penny Bank at Leeds owned the Grafton Galleries in London. I sought an interview with one of the Directors, and arranged verbally with him that in 1916, and 'for the duration of the war and one year after' the Association should have the use of the Grafton Galleries for four weeks in each year for the inclusive sum of one hundred pounds.

From 1916 to 1920 the A.A.A. held its annual exhibition at the Grafton Galleries. The war, which took off the younger generation to other activities and early deprived us of Gerard Chowne, Gaudier-Brzeska, Henri Doucet and other valued members, sadly reduced our numbers. But the principle of the exhibitions remained the same. There was no jury, the order of hanging was decided by ballot, and till the space was exhausted no applicant was denied the

chance of exhibiting. After 1920 the price asked for the Grafton Galleries became prohibitive. The A.A.A. lingered for a while at Messrs. Heal's Mansard Gallery, which was not nearly large enough for our purpose, and then expired.

When I took hold at the end of 1914 I only promised to see the A.A.A. through the war. By 1920 I considered I had seen the job through. With my living to earn as a writer, I felt I could no longer devote so much time to an undertaking which repaid me with little except worry, anxiety and often abuse. I firmly believe that every civilised country ought to have one annual no-jury art exhibition on the lines of the Paris *Indépendants*. I believe so still more than ever, but I think I have done enough and if the artists want one it is for them to get it going. That is why six years ago I resigned all connection with the A.A.A., and hoped that the Arts League of Service would manage to get it revived. I hear they still discuss it periodically in Robert Street, but no exhibitions have been held.

It amazes many people that a society which has had the greatest success in Paris should be utterly impossible and impracticable in England. The explanation is simple: it fails because of the incurable snobbishness of the English artist. It is not enough for the average artist to exhibit, to get a chance of showing his work to the public: he wants to exhibit with somebody better than himself. Names, names, names! In England we worship names, and have no respect for unadvertised merit.

Again and again, when speaking of the A.A.A. to some half-fledged art-student, the young puppy has drawled, 'Well, who is exhibiting? I am rather particular whom I show with. Will you have anything by John, or Epstein, or Brangwyn?' The insolence and arrogance of it!

Respect for names was never encouraged at the A.A.A. Once a very highbrow person rushed into the Grafton Galleries, as if he had only a moment to live, and breathlessly exclaimed, 'Aw, where are the Epsteins? I've only

a few minutes.' I looked him up and down, and then replied, 'With the rest of the sculpture.'

Why should a writer slave to serve the interests of such a gang? The ingratitude of artists is notorious, and the more one does for them the more one may. Most of them take all they can get as a right, and expect you to thank them for letting you help them.

There are exceptions, of course, and thank God I have known a good many! But of all those who have benefited by the A.A.A. Charles Ginner is almost the only one who ever told me that he owes everything to the Association, and that it was the turning point in his life when, through the Allied Artists, he got to know Gilman and Gore. But otherwise, those who, like Lucien Pissarro, owed it least, are the artists who have spoken most generously of the A.A.A.

Even the affection of an artist may develop into something like a boomerang. Dear Sickert, I am very fond of him, and I think he likes me; but I was terribly pained once to read a review written by him in which he slashed to ribbons my book on *Some Contemporary Artists*. A few days later he took me to lunch at the Criterion, and when I murmured my sorrow, he plaintively exclaimed, 'But what else *could* I do? I had to slate it, for you know you praised my work in it far too highly.'

So does the critic 'get it' both ways.

# XIII

## THE LEEDS ART GALLERY

Up to April 1912, all my life—apart from four years at Cambridge and visits to country and seaside resorts—had been spent in the capitals of London and Paris. I was completely ignorant of the provinces, I had no experience of industrial towns, I had no acquaintance with the manufacturing and commercial classes. My parents' friends had belonged chiefly to the professional class, the men were stockbrokers, barristers, architects, physicians, musicians, etc.: my own friends, since leaving Cambridge, were chiefly writers and artists.

When I went to Leeds I found myself in a new world, and it was a world in which I never felt myself to be anything but a stranger. I did not know a soul in Leeds when I was appointed Curator, and how I came to be selected is still a mystery to me. For I am conscious that I am not at all the kind of being to make a satisfactory municipal officer.

Why I applied for the position is a little easier to explain. Relatives and friends had kept urging me for years to abandon my precarious way of living by writing, and endeavour to get some 'regular and permanent' employment. Shortly before applications were invited for this post, I had observed in various exhibitions some particularly good works labelled 'Bought for the Leeds Art Gallery.' One of them was Orpen's portrait of his wife, known as 'The Red Scarf.' In my ignorance I imagined that Leeds must be a

go-ahead place, and that there was a chance to build up a really fine collection of modern art.

I was encouraged in this optimism by knowing that the new Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University was Sir Michael Sadler, and with the co-operation of this noted collector and art-connoisseur, I thought a great deal might be done. Though I knew the son, I did not meet the father till I went to Leeds, and though my five years in the West Riding were not particularly happy, my brightest hours there were due to the friendliness of the Vice-Chancellor and other members of the University circle.

Of the Leeds City Council I find it most difficult to speak in parliamentary language. Never before had I come into contact with the kind of men who become councillors and aldermen, and—with remarkably few exceptions—I was appalled at their grossness, their ignorance and general lack of manners.

Before I was appointed Curator of the Leeds City Art Gallery, I used to think Mr. George Moore's essay on ' The Alderman in Art,' an amusing but gross exaggeration. After five years' experience I knew it to be a lamentable understatement of the facts.

With a few exceptions—among which an honourable place must be assigned to Aberdeen, Birmingham, Dublin and Glasgow—the municipal art galleries of Great Britain are deplorable. They are a disgrace to the elected persons responsible for their maintenance, a laughing-stock to art-loving visitors from abroad, and an offence as well as a burden to the average ratepayer.

The system on which these municipal institutions are at present conducted is, in theory, as follows : The City Council elects the members it thinks most fitted for the purpose of sitting on the Art Gallery Committee. This Committee is permitted to strengthen itself by co-opting a certain number of outside members who—though neither aldermen nor councillors—are specially qualified by their knowledge of art. The whole committee appoints a

salaried expert, known as the Director or Curator, to be its executive officer and its chief adviser in the acquisition of works of art and in the organising of exhibitions.

That is the *theory*.

But it works out very differently in practice. In theory, the Committee elects its own Chairman. In practice, the Chairman is appointed at a Party Meeting before the composition of the rest of the Committee is definitely settled. After the November elections the heads of the political parties in the Council usually confer together and portion out the Chairmanships and Deputy-Chairmanships of the various committees according to the respective strength of the Parties. The Chairman of the Art Gallery Committee is more often appointed for his services to his Party than for his knowledge or love of Art. Each of the political parties nominates two or three members—for whom room cannot be found on more ' important ' committees—and so the Art Gallery Committee is duly ' elected ' in form.

It might be hoped that even if the elected members be ignorant and uncultured, the co-opted members should preserve the balance of wisdom. Alas ! few are co-opted or seek co-option from a pure love of art.

Strange as it may seem to metropolitan readers, in the provinces membership of an Art Gallery Committee is coveted as a sort of social distinction. Peers are sometimes known to open art exhibitions, and if you are on the Art Gallery Committee you have a good chance to be introduced to members of the Peerage. This is why socially ambitious citizens seek to be co-opted. In my experience it was very easy to separate the sheep from the goats. When Lord So-and-So was to open an exhibition, I could hardly find room on the platform for all the aldermen and councillors who wished to attend. But when an exhibition is to be opened by a Director of a National Gallery, or similar authority famous only in art circles, then the Curator often experiences difficulty in getting together half a dozen of his Committee to greet the guest of honour.

For very shame a few genuine art-lovers—who have private collections and may leave something valuable to the City—may be co-opted, but these are always in the minority, and it is amazing how the most eligible citizens are ignored. All the five years I was at Leeds, Sir Michael Sadler was Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University. A connoisseur and collector of world-wide repute he was by far the most qualified man within the city boundaries to be on an art gallery committee. In any American city he would have been the first Trustee appointed. But was he ever co-opted to the Leeds Art Gallery Committee? No, never; Dick, Tom and Harry were co-opted, but the Vice-Chancellor of the University was left outside. In the provinces, so far as the Art Gallery is concerned, it is better to do a good turn to a local political leader than to have an international reputation as an art-lover.

With our municipal committees composed as they usually are, what chance is there of a provincial art gallery being efficiently and intelligently administered? If the Curator of the Gallery were given a free hand, perhaps the composition might not matter so much; but unfortunately the less intelligent the Committee is, the more it is inclined to shackle its paid expert, to hamper his activity, to weaken his authority, and to question his judgment. The first duty of a successful art Official is not to build up a great art collection, but to be pleasant and affable to his Committee and to keep in with the right parties. He must be firstly a courtier and a diplomatist, and secondly an experienced judge of art: but the second does not matter so much if he can give satisfaction in the first particulars.

Lest I be thought to exaggerate let me recount a few incidents for the accuracy of which I can vouch. The first illustrates the mentality of the men with whom the provincial art director must endeavour to work. Once I was privileged to conduct three members of an Art Gallery Committee round a Spring Exhibition. In gloomy silence they passed along walls hung with paintings by Orpen, Sargent,

Wilson Steer, Nicholson, and other eminent modern painters. Without a pause we progressed to the last room devoted to 'local artists,' that is to say, artists resident in the city whose work could not be rejected without fear of losing a vote. Here the trio at last came to a standstill before a portrait worthy of a place on the lid of any chocolate box. Immersed in aesthetic thought before this painting of an attractive young woman, they stood awhile in silence: and then one councillor nudged another, remarking, 'Eh! A wudna mind takin' yon t' Blackpool for a week-end.'

Shortly before I was appointed Curator the Leeds City Council voted a sum of money for a portrait of a former Chairman of the Art Gallery Committee by Herkomer; but throughout my Curatorship not one penny was granted for the purchase of works of art. This parsimony did not greatly disturb me, for I judged it would be easier to smuggle really good things into the gallery, if they were presented than if they were bought. Accordingly I organised a body of private subscribers with whose help some very valuable additions were made to the city's collection. But I soon learnt the truth of the saying, 'The more one does the more one may.' My next difficulty was to get an adequate grant for maintenance.

When an exhibition of Mr. Gordon Craig's stage-models and designs was opened at Manchester I was exceedingly anxious that it should come to Leeds. As Huddersfield wanted the exhibition after Leeds, the cost was trifling; the transport one way from Manchester, catalogues and insurance, would, I estimated, be covered by an expenditure of thirty pounds. But my Committee—most of whom had never heard of Gordon Craig—definitely refused to sanction this expenditure of ratepayers' money. In desperation I asked if I might have the loan of a gallery, if I could find private benefactors to guarantee all the costs of the exhibition; and this much the Committee granted me. The sum needed was generously guaranteed by three of my personal

friends, the late Sam Wilson, J.P., Mr. F. H. Fulford and Sir Michael Sadler. The exhibition was held, and, as I expected, proved to be a conspicuous success both from a popular and educational standpoint. Thousands of school-children filed past the stage-settings of ' Hamlet ' and other plays, and their teachers assured me that Mr. Craig's exhibition had quickened the youngster's interest in Shakespeare and stimulated their imaginations as nothing previously had done.

What happened ?

The next time I had an idea for an exhibition and sought sanction for the necessary expenditure from my Committee, the Chairman, Alderman Willey, said to me, ' Well, Mr. Rutter, if you are so keen about this exhibition, why don't you do what you did last time, and get some of your friends to defray the expenses ? We'll lend you a gallery with pleasure.'

One of my first rows with my Committee was caused, after a private body of subscribers had presented the gallery with a magnificent collection of original drawings by Phil May, by my spending without special authorisation a sum of four or five pounds in printing and affixing posters informing the citizens that the generous gift made to them was now on exhibition. ' We will not have the ratepayers' money spent without OUR being consulted,' raged the aldermen and councillors.

While willingly admitting that I am not at all the right sort of person to be a municipal official—except perhaps in Fascist Italy where dictators are welcome—I stoutly maintain that the average alderman or councillor is still more unfitted to be on any art gallery committee.

Even when an art gallery committee is composed of decent men with a fair sprinkling of genuine connoisseurs, the municipal *system* is apt to destroy any possibility of efficient administration. An extraordinary situation arose in Bradford more than a dozen years ago. The Art Gallery Committee there had unanimously resolved to purchase for £300

William Strang's ' Bank Holiday ' (now in the Tate Gallery) : but when this resolution, in accordance with the usual procedure, came before the City Council for confirmation the Council refused to sanction the purchase and referred this minute back to the Committee. At its next meeting the Committee stood firm by its decision, and again sent the minute forward, the co-opted members threatening to resign in a body if the purchase of Mr. Strang's picture was not ratified by the Council. However, the threat was all in vain, for, ignoring the Art Gallery Committee, the Council at the following meeting took the unprecedented step of appointing a special delegation of three members to visit London with powers to purchase ' a suitable picture ' for the City Art Gallery. The delegates came to London, where no doubt they thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and they concluded the business by purchasing a picture by Mr. Tom Mostyn for rather more than double the price which the Council refused to pay for the Strang.

Under the present system, when situations similar to those related arise, what alternative is left to an Art Director or Curator who takes his job seriously but—Murder or Suicide ? I am astounded at my moderation when, my own time coming, I chose suicide.

Often the curator of an English municipal museum is more embarrassed by private generosity than by public parsimony. The head of a family dies and the widow with her children moves into a smaller house ; the local art gallery is made a dumping-ground for the biggest and most unsaleable picture rashly acquired by the deceased. When the curator protests against the acceptance of such a picture, his committee sternly informs him that it will put no slight on the family of a much respected citizen !

Once at Leeds, by diplomatic persuasion, I staved off the presentation of a very big and very dull landscape by a Victorian academician—already represented in the collection—and persuaded the family to give us instead a very small but exquisitely jewel-like painting by William Muller.

But both the family and my committee were discontented with my choice, for the average northern or midland business man attaches more importance to quantity than quality in paint and other things.

At almost the last Committee meeting I attended at Leeds, the Committee—entirely against my emphatically given advice—accepted a sixth painting by Atkinson Grimshaw, by whom there were already five pictures in the municipal collection, and at the same time rejected a charming sanguine drawing by Mr. Charles Shannon, R.A. When I pressed for the latter to be accepted, the Chairman indignantly snorted, 'We don't want bits of things like this in the gallery: we only want important pictures.' The Shannon drawing, which was rejected, was offered by the National Art Collections Fund: the Grimshaw, which was accepted, was offered by a family, members of which had taken an active part in the municipal politics of Leeds. Need any more be said? Surely it is clear that maladministration—of which I have given only a few examples out of a legion available—is due to the supremacy of political over artistic interests in the affairs of our municipal art galleries.

Nobody with experience can doubt that our provincial art galleries would be more wisely administered if they were cut adrift from municipal politics and controlled by a joint board of trustees on which, in addition to representatives of the City Council, there sat representatives of the Board of Education and of some local body like the 'Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum.' City Councils will not give up the control of their art galleries till they see some advantage in doing so: therefore the first thing to be done is the organisation in each provincial centre of a strong and influential body of subscribers. Secondly, the Board of Education has to be persuaded that it would be worth while to make a small annual grant to municipal galleries that afforded facilities for efficient education in art. Then, and not till then, we may hope for better and brighter art galleries in the provinces.

With the working people of Leeds I got on a great deal better than I did with their employers. Generally speaking they were much more intelligent, more refined in thought, more civil in manner. Together with Arthur Greenwood—then on the staff of Leeds University, and now a Labour M.P.—I took a keen and active interest in the Leeds branch of the Workers' Educational Association. On the whole I am inclined to think my work for the W.E.A.—on committees, lectures, classes, etc.—was the most useful work I did at Leeds.

Perhaps as a writer myself I am biased, but I do believe that people have to be helped to understand and appreciate art. In the fourteenth century possibly the populace liked good art instinctively : to-day it certainly does not. Bad taste is largely the result of two widely-spread fallacies, the first being the notion that beauty is the result of ' added ornament,' and the second being an idea that the main business of painting is to ' imitate nature ' and that consequently a picture should resemble a coloured photograph as much as possible.

But when I say that the appreciation of a work of art may be quickened and aided by a verbal commentary, I certainly do *not* mean that this commentary should take the form of a *description* of the work. One of my first quarrels with my Committee was over the stupidity and inefficiency of the printed description.

When I assumed charge of the Leeds Art Gallery, every picture was defaced by a tablet attached to the frame, a gilt tablet in which under glass was a description of the picture in anything from six to twenty lines of print. You know the kind of thing :

' Outside a small haven in a rocky coast, fleets of fishing boats are sailing on a blue sea, their orange sails lit by the setting sun. A girl, seated on a rock . . . .'

Almost the first thing I did was to have these tablets taken off the frames of the pictures. My Committee was horrified.

'People want to know what the pictures are about!' they protested.

'Then let them *look* at the pictures,' I replied.

Further I argued, that if you give people a free choice between paint and print, in the present state of education, they will choose print every time. If the gallery was to have any educational effect, this was to be effected by visitors looking at the pictures and not merely reading about them. The picture, if it had any merit whatsoever, could tell them far more about the blueness of the sea than any printed words. There was no need for a tablet to impart the information that the sea was blue or that the grass was green. The youngest visitors were quite capable of ascertaining these facts from the colours in the picture, and if the tablets were replaced it would only mean that most people would spend five minutes in reading the print and afterwards spend less than half a minute in glancing at the picture.

I had my way, but only after a terrific tussle with the aldermen and councillors, and many of them never ceased to lament the disappearance of these tablets.

A few weeks later I had an amusing experience of what comes of words attached to works of art. The window of my curatorial office—a miserably dark little hole—overlooked the sculpture gallery. Just outside my window was a bronze bust of a blind man by a local Leeds sculptor, and moulded in bronze at the base of the bust was the line—

'The Day is Dark and the Night.'

A party of citizens was closely examining this bust one afternoon, and the leader immediately fastened on the inscription.

'The day is dark,' he read out slowly and paused. 'And the night'—a much longer pause—'it doan't say what the night is.'

But I do not present this perfectly true incident as a typical example of Yorkshire intelligence. On the contrary, some of the working-men were extremely shrewd in their

remarks about pictures. In 1915 I persuaded the Trustees of the National Gallery that Whistler's ' Battersea Bridge ' and Turner's ' Yacht Racing at Cowes ' would be safer at Leeds than in London. So I obtained the loan of them—and incidentally the train in which I took them north was held up for a couple of hours while Zeppelins scattered bombs in the neighbouring fields. The pictures arrived safely, however, and were subsequently hung on screens in the Central Hall. One Saturday afternoon I asked a W.E.A. friend who had dropped in, a middle-aged artisan, which of the two pictures he liked best. After some thought he said he preferred the Whistler.

' That is very interesting,' I said. ' Tell me why you like it better.'

' Well, Mr. Rutter,' he replied, ' it seems to me that this (the Whistler) is one picture. But that (the Turner) looks to me like two pictures stuck together.'

It was a perfectly just criticism, for the Turner—in which the sea and sky are not evenly matched—does not possess unity to the degree of the Whistler.

# XIV

## EPILOGUE

I SEEM to remember having read somewhere or other a statement to the effect that every man succeeds in getting what he wants most in life. Misconceptions on this head exist, it was argued, because so few people realise what it is they really want most.

Looking back across the years it would appear that what I myself have wanted most have been liberty and leisure, and I can certainly say that whatever else I may have lacked, these I have usually had. It was probably a certain restraint on my liberty that made my official position at Leeds irksome to me, and I felt something of the same constraint during the latter part of the War when I was an A.A.O. at the Admiralty. I have always had an instinctive dislike to 'office hours,' to pinning myself down to any situation where I could not get up and go out any time that I wished to do so. To have to be in a certain place within certain fixed hours is the lot of the majority of mankind, and in having escaped this for most of my life since I left school I count myself fortunate.

Freedom of movement is very precious to me; although the profession of letters is usually regarded as a sedentary occupation not conducive to an active life. Indeed, the only furiously active part of my life was the few years during which I was connected with the militant suffrage movement, and of this activity I have said nothing, because if I once began I should want to fill a volume with my experiences

during this exciting time. It is all over now, the battle has been won, and this is not the place in which to recount the skirmishes in which I had the honour to take part.

But I cannot close this heterogeneous assortment of reminiscences without making some reference to the women I was privileged to meet and know during these years. To have been associated with the Pankhursts and the Kenneys, with Mrs. Pethick Lawrence and Lady Constance Lytton, with Flora Drummond, Emily Davidson, Charlotte Marsh, the Duvals and many others, is one of the recollections of which I am most proud. The devotion, the loyalty, the *esprit de corps*, the heroic disinterestedness of the militant suffragettes are things I shall never forget, and if I could not see eye to eye with them all during some of the later phases of the movement, individually and collectively they have never ceased to have my deepest respect and most profound admiration. It was Meredith—particularly with his *Diana of the Crossways*, *The Egoist*, and *Lord Ormont and his Aminta*—who first inclined my heart to feminism, and it is as Meredithean heroines, supple and staunch as steel and shining as brightly, that I shall always think of the leaders of the suffragettes.

How profoundly our lives are influenced by people we have never met. It is a grief to me sometimes that I just missed meeting Meredith, Anatole France and Henry James, three writers whom I love above all other moderns and whose works have been for me great formative influences. But it is always a comfort to remember that the best part of any man is his work, and those who know the work of an author, who know it thoroughly, know the best that is in him. Of course, they may also know the worst; but it is even easier to drop a book than to drop an acquaintance.

# APPENDIX

## THE MAFEKING CAMPAIGN—1899-1900

(*Compiled from material supplied by Colonel Harry White*)

The small, but gallant, Northern Column under the command of Colonel Plumer was composed exclusively of Colonial troops, or men with Colonial training and experience, mostly volunteers, and was commanded by a mere handful of Imperial officers. This was the column which fired the first shot of the war, which hammered at a numerically superior foe for over nine months, and eventually when the long-deferred reinforcements arrived, relieved the beleaguered garrison at Mafeking.

The achievements of this force are the more remarkable, and worthy of praise, when it is remembered that Colonel Plumer [1] with his staff and officers did not arrive in Buluwayo till about a month before the actual outbreak of hostilities. For the account which follows I am indebted to the courtesy of one who took an active part, from the commencement, in the operations of this column, and I have endeavoured, so far as possible, to relate the story as I heard it from his own mouth.

In the first week of October, 1899, a few days before the ultimatum of the Transvaal Government to Great Britain was issued on the 9th, Colonel Plumer sent three squadrons (about 240 men) from Tuli to guard the Border stations at Crocodile (or Limpopo) river, Rhodes Drift, and Pont Drift, and to watch the Boer force which was posted on the opposite bank of the river.

On the 11th of October, when the time allowed by President Kruger's ultimatum had expired, one of the Boer sentries attempted to cross the river and was promptly fired upon by the British troops. This is believed to have been the first shot fired

[1] Now Field-Marshal Lord Plumer.

in the war. The commandant, thereupon, sent a message to the English commander, under a flag of truce, to ask why the sentry had been fired upon: he received the reply that hostilities had commenced on that date. With true Boer 'slimness' the commandant professed ignorance of this fact!

The British squadrons maintained their position on the bank of the river until the arrival of another Boer force, consisting of 2500 burghers with ten guns. Against these overwhelming odds—more than twenty to one—Colonel Plumer had no alternative but to retire on Tuli. In the third week of October, however, when, according to Kaffir information, the enemy had reduced their forces, E squadron of the Rhodesia Regiment, numbering 100 men, was sent down to reoccupy the position at Rhodes Drift. The first attack made by this squadron was most satisfactory, and they were successful in stampeding a number of Boer horses—a manoeuvre which considerably embarrassed the enemy. On the 24th of October the squadron delivered a second attack, but this time it found that the Boers were strongly reinforced, and after a brisk engagement it was compelled to retire with a loss of four wounded.

Three days after this encounter the enemy surrounded E squadron, which was encamped on a low kopje within 1700 yards of the enemy's position. Their situation became most critical. A large number of the horses had been shot, and the road to Tuli was barred by a force of 300 Boers, with three guns in position. Taking all these facts into consideration, the officers in command wisely decided to abandon the horses, and effect a retirement on foot under the cover of night. The start was made at seven o'clock in the evening, and after a forced march covering 30 miles, through dense bush for most of the way, the little column eventually arrived in Tuli at 2 p.m. on the following afternoon *without the loss of a single man or rifle*. Truly, a brilliant piece of work!

For six weeks after this the column was chiefly employed in patrol work, the monotony of which was relieved by an occasional small fight or skirmish. The duties of a patrol, it is well known, are more arduous than glorious. In this case there was a frontier of several hundred miles to be guarded against a foe, superior in numbers, which was constantly swarming in the neighbourhood. At any moment an isolated little party stood in danger of coming into contact with a whole commando, or at any rate a strong patrol of the enemy.

In the second week of December, after leaving a hundred men

in Tuli as a garrison, Colonel Plumer, with the remainder of the force, marched in a south-westerly direction to Gaberones—a distance, as the crow flies, of over 300 miles. Here he was joined by the Southern Rhodesian Volunteers and a detachment of the British South African Police, this reinforcement bringing up the strength of the column to a total of 900 men. He then pushed on to Crocodile Pools, where he occupied a series of kopjes, and took up a position in front of the enemy.

On the 12th of February a force of 250 men was detached with orders to attack the Boer gun kopje, where a fifteen-pounder quick-firer had been posted, which had caused serious annoyance, and some damage, to the column. It had been arranged to deliver the attack one hour before dawn, so at midnight the force started and had to traverse 4000 yards through thick bush. It arrived in good order, and proceeded to deploy at the base of the kopje. The ascent was made, but unfortunately only E and A squadrons hit off the gun kopje accurately, the remainder diverging too far to the right. On coming within 50 yards of the fort, E and A squadrons charged with fixed bayonets, but were stopped in their advance by lines of barbed wire. The enemy began to pour in a murderous fire at close range and exploded three mines, but our men, without flinching, coolly proceeded to cut the wire. Men were dropping fast when the officer in command, seeing that the remainder of the force had lost the direction, ordered a retirement.

At this time E and A squadrons were within *twenty yards* of the fort, indeed Captain French was shot dead when only *five yards* away from the wall. The wisdom of the retirement, under such circumstances, was proved by the heavy loss sustained by the gallant E squadron in this engagement. Out of a total strength of 30 men no less than 14 were killed or wounded. Notwithstanding this the force retired in good order, and returned to camp shortly after dawn. The men behaved with the utmost gallantry throughout the attack, they were ordered not to fire, and, although exposed to a hail of bullets, obediently refrained from doing so. During the whole of the retirement the Boers kept up an incessant fire on the wounded and stretcher-bearers, and also on the British ambulance, which was posted close by the kopje opposite their position. Although to some critics this attack may appear to have been reckless, and of no practical value, it shook the enemy's self-confidence severely, and resulted in their retreating southwards within three or four days. There is no doubt that another potent reason for this

attack being made, was in order to divert a portion of the Boer force from Mafeking, which at this time was sorely pressed.

When the enemy had retired, Colonel Plumer advanced to Lobatsi, repairing the line as he went along and still holding Gaberones and Crocodile Pools, in both of which he had left garrisons.

On the 18th of March Colonel Plumer ordered a further advance to Pitsani, the old camp of Dr. Jameson, and sent a flanking party to Korwe kopje. A force under Lieutenant-Colonel Bodle, B.S.A.P., formed a laager within four miles of Pitsani, but was forced to retire on Lobatsi by the Boers bringing a force of 500 men and six guns against him. The British contingent, having no guns to reply with, was shelled out of its position by heavy artillery fire.

On the following day the Boers again attacked Colonel Plumer's main body, and he decided to retire from Lobatsi.

With so small a force, and lacking artillery, his position had become untenable, while, owing to the length of the railway to be protected, there was fear lest the Boers should endeavour to cut his communications somewhere between Lobatsi and his base at Gaberones—fully sixty miles off—or still further north at Mochudi. The flanking party at Korwe kopje was ordered to retire on the main column, and after leaving a force in position at Crocodile Pools and Gaberones, the Rhodesian Regiment and the B.S.A. Police were sent to Sefeteli, to wait there till news came of a Southern column or till reinforcements arrived from General Carrington.

At the end of a fortnight a flying column of 250 men with the maxim, under Colonel Plumer, left there to make a reconnaissance towards Ramathlabama, which they reached on the 31st of March. Here they halted, fed the men, and watered the horses. Leaving the maxim and a small party of men to guard the wagons, the remainder of the column advanced along the railway line towards Mafeking. When in sight of the town, and only about six miles away from it, the advance guard fell in with a strong Boer patrol. In quick succession the left and right flanks also became engaged, and a very hot action ensued. The enemy, who turned out to be 800 strong and well-mounted on strong ponies, made a determined advance in crescent formation, and persistently endeavoured to envelop the column. For more than an hour Colonel Plumer was just able to maintain his position, but at the end of that time he deemed it advisable to retire towards Ramathlabama, where he had left the maxim and forty men. The

retirement was the more difficult by reason of the ten miles of fairly open bush veld which lay between the columns and the latter place. The enemy continued to follow up and press hard on the flanks, repeatedly trying to outflank the British on either side. Fighting went on without intermission until the squadrons arrived at Ramathlabama, a distance of ten miles. Thence the retreat was covered by the maxim, and at sunset, after a stiff fight, the column marched back to its old camp at Sefeteli.

Owing to the enormous superiority of the enemy's numbers, and the exposed nature of the country to be traversed, the casualties of the column were heavy. Six officers were killed or wounded out of the twelve present, and out of a total of 250 men and horses, forty men were killed or wounded, and seventy-three horses put out of action. Colonel Plumer was slightly wounded in the right arm, and had his horse shot under him. The killed included Lieutenant Milligan, the famous Yorkshire cricketer, and Captain Fred Crewe, one of the most popular of the Rhodesians, who was shot while covering the retreat of others. Only four dead and four severely wounded, however, were left on the field of battle, otherwise the enemy took no prisoners or wagons.

During this reconnaissance the horses covered a distance of *seventy miles* in the wonderful time of *twenty-six hours*. When it is remembered that, as a rule, a horse can only travel two miles in South Africa in the time it could do six miles in England, and that no less an authority than Major Burnham, the American scout, has stated that thirty miles at best pace would finish off any horse in South Africa, the brilliance of this performance will be recognised.

That such a feat was even possible was largely due to the fact that all Colonel Plumer's men were mounted on Free State or Basuto ponies, which are far superior, in South Africa, to the imported English, Australian, or Argentine horses. They are small but hardy, and do not require a large amount of oats or mealies. Unlike the bigger horses, three or four hours grazing a day and 4 to 6 lbs. of oats will keep them fit and enable them practically to go on for ever. Too much stress cannot be laid on this point, for the advantage possessed by the Boers in being entirely mounted on native ponies was one of the chief reasons of their success in constantly eluding capture at the eleventh hour.

Anticipating another attack from the Boers, the next move of Colonel Plumer was strongly to entrench his position at Sefeteli.

It was about this time that a rumour first began to circulate in the camp of a relief column coming up from the south, via Fourteen Streams and Vryburg.

The rumour was not without foundation, for on the 12th of May, Colonel Plumer received notice from Lord Roberts that he might expect a reinforcing column from the south about the 18th. Colonel Plumer, accordingly, decided to leave his position at Sefeteli on the 16th, and march to Jan Massibi's, which was obviously the place where a relief column might be expected.

By extraordinary good luck, and owing to the perseverance and ingenuity of Mr. Zedeerburgh, the well-known coach runner in Rhodesia, four guns—so long looked for and anxiously awaited—manned by Canadians and drawn by mules, arrived in Sefeteli at six o'clock in the morning of the very day on which Colonel Plumer had decided to leave. The start was made at 3 p.m. on the same afternoon, and about dawn the next day the column arrived, after a march of eighteen miles, at Jan Massibi's. As Colonel Plumer was putting out his outposts, the advance guard of the reinforcing column under Colonel Mahon arrived in sight. Considering the extent of the country to be traversed by both columns, and the fact that no special spot or hour for the rendezvous had been selected, the junction of these forces may be regarded as a marvellous piece of work, and a triumph of judgment for Colonel Plumer and his staff. How Mafeking was relieved on the following day is too fresh in the memory of the public to need repetition here.

It is difficult to overestimate the value of the services rendered by this Northern Column, especially when it is remembered that although Colonel Plumer did not arrive in Buluwayo till one month before the war began, in this short period he found time to form, organise, and equip a regiment of 500 mounted volunteers. For nine long months Rhodesia was kept free from Boer invasion by the unaided efforts of this small force. Further, in spite of continual Boer raids, the line from Mafeking to Mochudi —a distance of about 140 miles—was kept unbroken and intact: nor was this the limit of Colonel Plumer's responsibility, with regard to the railway line, for he had really to see to the protection of the line all the way to Buluwayo, and for a long time Palapye (the chief town of Khama, head of the Ba-Mangwato tribe) had to be garrisoned. Colonel Plumer was handicapped by always having to keep transport and extra supplies of food and forage to run into Mafeking as soon as it was relieved, and also by

having to feed 1300 Kaffirs, who, from time to time, had escaped from Mafeking, and come to his camp at Sefeteli.

The result of all this was, that within three days of the raising of the siege Colonel Plumer was able to send into Mafeking a train laden with supplies and provisions for the hungry town. Major-General Baden-Powell, in addressing Colonel Plumer's men, laid particular stress on the fact that *the train arriving in Mafeking was the real relief of that place.*

Up to the time of the relief and the arrival of the Canadian Contingent, the only artillery at Colonel Plumer's disposal consisted of four maxims—scattered among his various posts on the line of communications, a couple of old 2.5 screw guns—which by reason of the age of the powder were practically useless, for they could only carry 2000 yards, and very uncertain even at that —and one 15-pounder, for which last he had only 250 rounds of ammunition and no means of getting any more. In order to preserve his lines of communications, garrisons had to be maintained at Tuli, Mochudi, Gaberones, Lobatsi, and Sefeteli; and this with a force which numbered at the utmost 1000 men.

Colonel Plumer, consequently, was never able to go into action with more than 250 men, till he struck camp at Sefeteli and joined Colonel Mahon. Up to the relief, Colonel Plumer had six officers killed and eight wounded out of his scanty force.

More often than not the men in his column had to live on bare rations, and did not get fresh meat for weeks. To these men the outcry at home, with regard to hospital arrangements, must have appeared a trifle ludicrous. The comfort of a modern hospital was unknown to them; they had next to nothing, but, said my informant, 'the worst cases never complained.' At Tuli a 'dugga' and a very old and dirty thatched building sufficed, and later on the waiting rooms of the Mochudi, Gaberones, and Lobatsi stations had to do duty for housing the sick and wounded. In the field they never had a tent of any sort for the purpose, and the worst cases lay in a wagon or under a Bucksail. The column was very short of drugs, milk, and all comforts, and it was only at very rare intervals, owing to the lack of transport, that the men were able to supplement their rations by necessaries—not luxuries—purchased out of their own pay and sent down from Buluwayo.

It must further be remembered that fifty per cent. of the men in this column went to the front, not from pure love of fighting or 'for the fun of the show,' but because they were vitally interested in British supremacy in South Africa, and wanted to

see England come forth victorious from the contest. They were in truth fighting for their homes and means of existence.

Little has been written about them, for no war-correspondent was attached to the Northern Column. England rightly honoured the heroic defence of Mafeking; but she has been slower to recognise the brave efforts of the men who, for *nine months*, against fearful odds, laboured to relieve the garrison.

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